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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

LATVIANS IN ALBERTA: SOME SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHARACTERISTICS

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

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AND

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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submitted by Ausma Birzgalis

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Supervisor

Date December 12 1979

DEDICATION

To my family.

ABSTRACT

This study examines some of the social and political characteristics of the Latvian community in Alberta, one of the smallest ethno-cultural groups in the province. To understand the small ethnic community better, a brief outline of the history of Latvia and the Latvians is presented, and some historical background information on Latvian Albertans. The core of the study deals with the Latvian immigrants who came to Alberta after the Second World War and who brought with them the culture and the political traditions of their homeland. It does this by analyzing data generated by a survey of the identifiable Latvian population of Alberta.

The social data show that a process of acculturation to the new Canadian homeland is in process, and the political data show nothing to counteract this process. The study concludes that the ethno-cultural survival of Latvian Albertans, beyond the next generation, may well be impossible.

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CHAPTER I

This study focuses on the question of survival of a small ethno-cultural group in the Canadian context. Its purpose is to look at some social and political characteristics of the Latvians in Alberta; and to test the following hypothesis: can a small ethno-cultural group survive in the Canadian, particularly in the Alberta, context? The study has additional aims: to preserve the living memory of Latvian-Canadian immigrants and their descendants in the diversified cultural mosaic of Alberta, to familiarize the Canadian public with the background and life of a specific ethnic group, and to encourage other ethnic groups, especially small groups, to record and study their Canadian experience. The study should give Canadian political scientists, sociologists, historians and others, material with which to study the process of assimilation of an ethnic group into the fabric of Canadian society.

The Latvian Community in Alberta is one of the small ethno-cultural groups whose cultural identity is in jeopardy. In spite of the fact that Latvians came to the province as early as the first decade of this century, no work has been done to examine the history of the various waves of the Latvian immigration, the pattern of settlement, and the attempts of this small community to maintain its ethnic identity and at the same time to integrate into the Canadian way of life.

The core of this study is based on the author's interviews, based on a structured questionnaire, with all Albertans of Latvian origin who could be identified and located. A major difficulty, therefore, was to determine how many ethnic Latvians live in Alberta today.

Prior to the First World War and during the late 1920's a number of Latvians settled in Alberta. Exact numbers on Latvian immigration before the census of 1921 are not available, since up to 1918 Latvia was part of the Russian Empire, and Latvian immigrants arriving in Canada were classified as Russians. In 1921 there were 156 Latvians in Alberta.[1] The community grew following the Second World War, and in 1951[2] and 1961,[3] the Latvians numbered 679 and 972 respectively. According to the Federal Census of Canada of 1971 there were 1010 Latvians listed in Alberta.[4] Of those, 555 could still speak their mother tongue.[5]

Thus it is obvious that the majority of the Latvian population in Alberta owes its presence in this country to the effects of the Second World War. After the war, the bulk of these immigrants found themselves in Displaced Persons' Camps in Germany and made their way to Canada.

In order to identify the members of the community several steps were taken. The most loosely defined concept of ethnicity and at the same time the most often used by spokesmen of various ethno-cultural groups is information data obtained in response to the census question on ethnic origin, which is worded thus: "To which ethnic or cultural group did you or your ancestor on the male side belong on coming to this country?"[6] In reality, however, data shown under the heading "ethnic origin" do not reflect the real size of a given group, since the correlation between what is understood by ethnic origin and the actual sense of belonging to a particular cultural group is quite tenuous. It should be borne in mind that the census questionnaire does not provide the opportunity to reply "Canadian" to the question on ethnicity. If there were a possibility to answer "Canadian" to the question of ethnic origin, the

statistical profile of ethnic groups in Canada would be quite different.

The most useful description of ethnic identification appears to be the question on mother tongue, the language first spoken and still understood.[7] In regard to language, however, this information is too imprecise since it does not provide us with an answer as to what language is presently used at home. Respondents, by citing a given language as "mother tongue" could possible be using another language in everyday life. They could have spoken the mother tongue several years ago and could still understand it without using it in their everyday activities. As a result, data obtained on the basis of the question on "mother tongue" could either underestimate or overestimate the actual size of a particular ethnic group.

On the other hand, the responses to the question "language most often spoken at home"[8] gives a much too narrow interpretation, eliminating such situations as mixed marriages, and the second, third and fourth generation descendents of immigrants, who frequently possess some knowledge of their "mother tongue" but do not know the language sufficiently to use it in conversation. Yet, in spite of the fact that they do not possess the language skills, they may well have an appreciation of the culture of their ancestors and a strong affinity with their ethnic group.

When the author set out to find the Latvians in Alberta for the survey, which was conducted in 1976-77, the difficulty regarding the ethnic origin was overcome by asking in the interviews if the individuals identify themselves with the Latvian ethnic group. It was possible to locate 720 Latvian Albertans. To account for the differences with the 1971 census figure of 1010, one has to assume that this difference is made up of the children and grandchildren of the immigrants who came

prior to the Second World War and who are assimilated completely into the Canadian way of life. Of the 720 found there were close to 200 Baltic Germans who claim their ancestry from Latvia and were thus classified by the census as Latvians, but who in fact are not Latvians. Most of them did not wish to participate in the survey. That leaves about 520 ethnic Latvian Albertans. For the purpose of this study, it was decided that only Latvian Albertans over the age of fifteen were to be included. The author succeeded in locating 410 adult members of the Latvian community in Alberta. Out of the 410 Latvians located, 326 (79.5%) were willing to give the information which provides the basis for this research.

The data gathered from the 326 responses gave the following information: there were 217 immigrants of Latvian ethnic origin, most of whom arrived in Alberta between 1946 and 1957, and 109 children over the age of fifteen, born to these Latvian immigrants in Canada.[9] Of course, this figure of 217 does not give the total number of Latvian immigrants to Alberta, because some immigrants were already dead by 1976, some had moved to other provinces, some refused to participate in the survey, and a few more immigrants could not be identified. The largest Latvian Albertan community is in and around Edmonton with 320 members, including children. The next largest center is in and around Calgary with about 75 Latvians and the smallest center is in Red Deer with 10 Latvians.

Research on this project began in the fall of 1976. First, a questionnaire was constructed, with seventy-two items.[10] Secondly, an index of all known members of the Latvian Albertan group had to be assembled. The records and files of all Latvian social and religious organizations in Alberta were collected, sorted out and catalogued in

order to locate Albertans of Latvian ethnicity. The 326 located and willing members of the Latvian ethnic group in Alberta were then interviewed by the author. In addition to the questionnaire, structured case histories of the most prominent Latvians were gathered. The data obtained from both the answers to the questionnaire and the interviews provide the basis for the study undertaken.

The study is confined to a description and analysis of the facts pertaining to the historical, social and political background of the Latvian Albertans. The approach is going to be descriptive and analytical. The data collected will make it possible to show the difficulty the Latvian Albertans have to preserve their ethno-cultural identity within the Western Canadian society, at a time when there is no immigration from their original homeland and the ties with the mother country are tenuous.

A number of books in Latvian, English and German were helpful, in providing the material for a brief historical outline on Latvia and the Latvians. Dr. A. Spekke, History of Latvia: An Outline; J. Rutkis, Latvia: Country and People; and Dr. E. Andersons, Cross Road Country: Latvia, are just a few of the many sources consulted.[11] Latvian newspapers published in Canada and the United States contained useful information. Also, the author had access to some unpublished manuscripts.[12]

The study consists of six chapters. This first chapter discusses the purpose of the study, including explanations of statistical data utilized in the work. The second chapter will deal with a brief outline of the history of Latvia and the Latvians. The third chapter will examine the three waves of Latvian immigration to Alberta. Chapters two and three are mainly for background information on Latvian Albertans. In the

fourth chapter the analysis of the data pertaining to the social characteristics of the Latvians in Alberta will be presented. The fifth chapter will deal with the political behaviour of Latvians in Alberta. In the concluding chapter, an effort will be made to draw conclusions as to the possibility of survival of a small ethno-cultural group under conditions existing at present in Canada and in particular in the province of Alberta.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I

1. Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Sixth Census of Canada, 1921. Vol. I, "Population". Ottawa, F. A. Acland, 1924, p. 357.

2. Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Ninth Census of Canada, 1951. "Population: General Characteristics." Vol. I. Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1953, p. 32-1.

3. Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of Canada, 1961. "Population: Ethnic Groups." Vol. 1 - Part 2, (Bulletin 1.2-5). Ottawa, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1962, p. 35-1.

4. Canada. Statistics Canada, 1971 Census of Canada. "Population: Ethnic Groups." Vol. 1 (Bulletin 1.3-2). Ottawa, Information Canada, 1973, p. 2-2.

5. Canada. Statistics Canada, 1971 Census of Canada. "Population: Mother Tongue". Col. 1 - Part 3 (Bulletin 1.3-4). Ottawa, 1973, p. 18-2. In view of the following discussion (pp. 3-5), this number seems inordinately high. The discrepancy can be accounted for by (1) those who speak some Latvian only, (2) those who died between 1971 and 1976 and (3) Baltic Germans who, while counted as Latvians, consider German their mother tongue.

6. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1971 Census of Canada. Ottawa, 1971 (Questionnaire), p. 8.

7. Ibid., p. 2.

8. Ibid., p. 6.

9. Survey done in 1976/77 by author.

10. Attached questionnaire in Appendix #1.

11. See bibliography.

12. Unpublished manuscripts: 1) Dr. Arch. P. Kundziņš, "Latvju sēta Albertā", Halifax, Nova Scotia; 2) Jane McCracken, "Charles Plavin", Historic Sites, Edmonton, Alberta.

CHAPTER II

LATVIA AND THE LATVIANS: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The state of Latvia which emerged as an independent country after the First World War has had a long history of foreign domination. In fact, the interwar years from 1918 to 1940 marked the first time in recorded history that the Latvians were in control of their country and steered the course of their own destiny.

Latvia occupies the central part of the Baltic area, which extends from the Finnish Gulf in the north to East Prussia in the south.[1] Characteristic of the Baltic area, a zone of up to 300 km. in breadth, inhabited by Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians, is the fact that in the west it has a natural sea border, while its open continental rear was through all history bounded by Russians, White Russians (Belorussians), Poles and Germans, nations with vastly larger territories and population. It meant that seven nations with widely varying linguistic, religious, and cultural characteristics and traditions met in the small area of the Baltic. Regarding religious affiliation we have in this area Protestants, (Latvians and Estonians), Roman Catholics (Lithuanians and Latvians), and the Greek Orthodox; the eastern part of Latvia is the northernmost province of Roman Catholicism in Europe. In 1940 Latvia was annexed by the Soviet Union, and became a constituent Soviet republic known officially as the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic.[3]

The country consists for the most part of a low-lying plain, broken by numerous lakes, rivers, marshes, glacial deposits, and peat bogs. The main river is the Daugava. Approximately 25% of the land surface of

Latvia is forested, with deciduous and coniferous trees being about equally distributed. Latvia is predominantly an agricultural country; the major occupation of the people is dairy farming. After 1940 an increasing percentage of the population was diverted from agriculture to industry. The processing of crops and dairy products are the main industries. Other important industries include textiles, footwear, cement, mineral fertilizers, steel, alcohol and lumber.[4]

Historical evidence shows that this geographically compact area on the southeast coast of the Baltic sea has been inhabited for many centuries by the Baltic peoples, the Latvians, Lithuanians, formerly also the Old Prussians, and in the north the Estonians, a Finno-Ugric people. The Latvian and Lithuanian peoples are related, both belonging linguistically to the Baltic family. Their languages show close affinity. Estonians, being Finno-Ugrian, are not ethnically related. However, as a result of historical developments, the Latvians had closer cultural relations with the Estonians than with the Lithuanians.

The Latvians are an ancient people. From the archeological findings, the shapes of tombs, tools and ornaments, one can identify the territories of the Old Latvian tribes: Sels and Latgallians, Zemgallians and Couronians; north of them dwelled Livs and Estonians. During the middle of the Iron Age (400-800 A.D.) Latgallians and Couronians migrated to the north into the areas inhabited by the Livs and the Estonians. In the Late Iron Age (800-1200 A.D.) the tribes maintained close relations with Scandinavia, especially central Sweden and Gotland. Slavic influences extended to the eastern regions and along the Daugava waterway. All through the country hill forts were established as administrative

centres of tribal areas and of small states.[5]

In 1186, the Archbishop of Bremen raised Meinhardt to the rank of Bishop of the Livs. Meinhardt's successor, Bishop Berthold, was the first to bring the crusaders to fight against the Livs in 1197. At the beginning of the thirteenth century the Order of the Brethen of the Sword was established. From 1202-1230 Bishop Albert and the Order fought against the Old Latvian tribes. In 1237, after its defeat, the Order was succeeded by the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order. From 1237 to 1290 the prolonged wars of the Order of the Teutonic Knights with the Old Latvian tribes ended in the subjection of the whole of the Latvian territory to German rule.[6]

From 1290 to 1561 the State of the Livonian Order ruled over Livonia, and the Latvian tribes gradually merged to form the Latvian people. In 1424, by a decision of the Landtag (Diet), the peasants were bound to the soil.[7]

The Reformation movement reached Livonia in 1523.[8] Following the Livonian War of 1558-1561 came the end to Livonia's independence, and the regions north of the Daugava river (Vidzeme) were incorporated into the Polish-Lithuanian state. Zemgale and Kurzeme became the Duchy of Kurzeme, also known as Kurland.[9]

In the 16th century we see the emergence of a new power, that of Muscovy. In 1577 Ivan IV of Muscovy invaded Vidzeme. Stephan Bathory, the King of the Polish-Lithuanian state, defeated the forces of Ivan IV in 1582 and made peace with Muscovy at Zapolie.[10] The treaty did not end the rivalry between the Polish-Lithuanian state and Muscovy over the domination of the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea and access to the

ports of Danzig and Riga. In addition, in the seventeenth century Sweden entered the race. The result was a prolonged war between the Polish-Lithuanian state and Sweden. The victor was Gustavus II Adolphus of Sweden, who imposed Swedish rule over Vidzeme in 1621.[11] Also, the Duchy of Kurland fell under the rule of Sweden, which lasted there from 1702 to 1709.[12]

In the history of Latvia, the Swedish rule in Livonia in the 17th century is regarded as the Golden Age. The Swedish government was interested in the education of the Latvian people, and elementary schools under the supervision of the church were established. In 1632 Gustavus II Adolphus founded the Dorpat (Tartu) University, an institution of higher learning for the whole Baltic area.[14] Tartu became a center of learning for Latvians and Estonians. The complete Latvian text of the Bible was translated by Ernst Glück (1625-1705), a Lutheran Pastor at Marienburg (Alūksne), in 1685 and 1689.[15] This monumental work had an impact upon the development of Latvian literature. The Swedish rule in Livonia ended with the beginning of the Great Northern War, 1700-1721. Peter the Great of Russia invaded Vidzeme in 1708 and two years later Riga surrendered to Peter's armies. In 1721, at the end of the Great Northern War and on the basis of the Treaty of Nystadt, Peter the Great annexed Livonia and Estonia. Later in the century, following the third partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795, the Duchy of Kurland was included in the borders of the Russian Empire. Thus, at the end of the eighteenth century all regions known now as Latvia were part of the Russian Empire.[16]

The Russian government left the administration of the Baltic provinces including Latvia in the hands of the local Baltic German nobility.

The Latvians remember the reign of Peter the Great (1682-1725) and Catherine II (1762-96) as the darkest period in their history.[17]

Tsar Alexander II (1855-1881), was convinced that the retardation of Russia's economic base, agriculture, was due to the continued existence of feudalism, and in 1861 he granted total emancipation to the Russian serfs. The Emancipation Edict included the Baltic serfs.[18]

The Latvian peasants, who for centuries had been left landless, profited by the 1861 decree in spite of its limitations. Hungry for independence and the social status ownership had bestowed upon the German and Russian ruling classes, the Latvian peasants eagerly accepted the decree as an interim measure. Communal ownership of land, the introduction of a monetary-based economy in rural areas and the prospects of better education injected a new strength into the Baltic peasantry. Even the heavy taxes, the inadequate communal holdings, the loss of traditional grazing rights on manorial communes, and the suspension of the reform movement (the peasant was trapped by the commune system, and in order to migrate to urban centers permission of the commune had to be obtained) could not dampen the aspirations of the peasantry to own what they considered theirs - the land that for centuries was owned by the gentry but worked by them. The year 1863 brought relief to the peasants in the Baltic provinces. The peasants acquired the right to move freely from place to place. They could now substitute payment in money or kind for the labour they owed the landlords. The land reforms of 1866[19] were followed by the reforms of local self-government; from 1866 on the rural communes were released from the guardianship of landlords and could freely elect their elders, councils and courts.[20] This did much to further the political

education of the Latvians. From the economic point of view these reforms led to an increase in the purchase of farms from the large landowners, which in turn resulted in the development of a strong Latvian peasant class.

In the eighteen sixties rapid industrial expansion began first in Riga and then in other urban centres. It led to an influx of Latvian peasants to the cities. This process of modernization, which shifted the economy from a primarily agricultural base to an industrial and urban one, gained momentum after 1866.

> The guild system was abolished in the crafts which from then on were open to the Latvians. Previously, the Latvians could join the guilds only if they renounced their nationality. The number of Latvian industrial workers was constantly growing. In 1840 there were 46 factories with about 2,000 workers in Riga. In 1864 there were 90 factories with 6,000 workmen, in 1874 the number had increased to 142 factories with 12,000 workers, while in 1897 the number of industrial workers reached 148,000 in Riga.[21]

In addition, railroads were being built at an accelerated pace and grain and other produce from Russia was transported by rail to Riga. Foreign trade grew briskly. In the period of 1897-1900, forty per cent of imports and exports that came to Riga were destined for or came from England.[22]

With industrialization and urbanization came changes in education and culture. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Latvia had very few elementary schools. The children were taught by their parents, and instruction centred mainly on learning how to read the Bible. Some improvement in the field of education came in 1832 when a law was passed establishing a council of the evangelical churches. Many well-known

clergymen were actively involved in the attempt to raise the level of education of the population, and under their influence schools were built on landlords' estates. In certain areas in the country the first schools were established only in 1875. During the same period teachers' colleges were being established; the first was founded at Valmiera in 1839, and continued its work up to 1890.[23] In the middle of the nineteenth century new elementary and district schools were opened with Latvian teachers as instructors, a factor that played a major role in the Latvian national awakening.

This national awakening in Latvia was due to the appearance of an elite shaped and guided by the national spirit. Dr. A. Spekke, the noted Latvian historian writes:

> The national renaissance of Latvia is associated with the activities of our university graduates who began to unite in the eighteen sixties. At the same time, the Latvian peasant was freeing himself from service to the landowners, and he began to buy land and to accumulate wealth. This new Latvian elite severed all ties with the Baltic Germans. Slowly, hampered by serious difficulties, these young men led their nation out of the social status into which it had been "pawned" by the German conquerors.[24]

The new Latvian elite thus came into being following the land reforms of the sixties. With them began a new period in the history of Latvia.

The process was a slow one. Economic and social factors were to blame for the slow progress. The peasants were poor and traditionally conservative, resistant to any radical changes. They were highly suspicious of outsiders and of new ideas. In the first part of the 19th century, the number of Latvian university graduates was very small; it

increased rapidly in the second half of the century. It was the educated albeit small elite that was to set the tone of Latvian national awakening. Among the early Latvian students at Tartu, the old Estonian University, three men deserve particular mention: Krišjānis Valdemārs, Krišjānis Barons and Juris Alunāns. K. Valdemars (1825-1891) was the spiritual leader of the national movement in Latvia. Although his main interest was economics, he was also interested in journalism, in Latvian language, and in Latvian history:

> Indeed, he was one of the first Latvians to attempt a study of the history of his country. His strong personality vividly impressed people in Dorpat (Tartu), St. Petersburg and Moscow. He gathered round him ardent Latvian patriots and organized their work, coping all the time with pecuniary difficulties and growing pressure from the Russian administration. Sensing intuitively the inherent gifts of his people, he was never tired of encouraging and stimulating them in his writings, speeches and in personal conversation. He urged the peasants to buy land and thus gain financial independence.[25]

In 1860 he founded a number of private schools for naval cadets. Within fifteen years about 6,800 young sailors had learned their trade there and helped the Latvians become a seafaring nation.[26]

The educated Latvian elite established its own newspaper in St. Petersburg, entitled "Peterburgas Avīze" (Petersburg Newspaper) (1862-65) with K. Barons as the first editor (1835-1923):

> He devoted his life to the collection of Latvian folksongs, building for himself a monumental memorial in eight thick volumes. An army of school teachers and school boys enthusiastically helped him. One of the biggest manifestations of the national spirit were the Song Festivals, the first one being held in 1873. Choirs trained for years throughout the country and then gathered in

> Riga into one mammoth choir and sang to an audience that came from all corners of the land.[27]

The Latvians, in spite of centuries of oppression, have been able to maintain a rich and indigenous cultural tradition. Latvian folksongs, or the so-called dainas, which are the principal source of information about the traditions of the Latvians, have with a few exceptions been transmitted by direct and verbal communication from one generation to the other, from the most ancient times to the present. At the end of the 19th century began the process of collecting and transcribing of the songs which is still continuing. The folksongs are still sung today in their ancient tunes which have been adapted to the simplified modern rhythm.

> The ethnographer would say: they are sung in the harmonisation of modern taste, though with some adequate and archaised turn, but sung with love and rapture, illustrative of national unity, creating moments of nobel spiritual elation, as proven by the great patriotic Song Festivals held periodically ever since 1873. A similar vitality of the ancient folklore may also be observed in some other regions of eastern Europe, but what confers on the Latvian tradition the mark of distinction is: (1) the tremendous number of folksongs in proportion to a population of less than two millions; (2) the very clear traces of ancient and even mythological remembrances expressed poetically; (3) the dominant importance of the folksongs in the formation and maintenance of national feelings throughout the many centuries. Seen in such light, this ancient national tradition becomes in its way a unique phenomenon.[28]

These folksongs constitute the most important part of the Latvian folklore. Their subject matter covers the events of a person's life from the time of his birth to his death. In a rich, poetical vein, the

folksongs also reflect the popular belief in a life after death. Attempts to determine the age of the folksongs have so far failed to produce definite results. The one thing that has been established is that the oldest songs appeared in the eleventh century or earlier, and that the tradition of composing new songs continued until the 19th century.[29] Latvian literature, music, and art blossomed in the period from 1860's to the Second World War.

The Latvian national awakening met from the very outset with great opposition on the part of the Baltic Germans, who were still the powerful holders of economic and intellectual influence in the country. Patient, the peasantry tolerated the half-way measures of emancipation for more than a generation before rebelling against the dominant role of the nobility.

With the increase in the urban population and with greater possibilities for education as well as improved economic situation, a political movement emerged:

> In 1886 a new political movement was formed known as the Jaunā Strāva (The New Current). In 1886 it also started its first newspaper Dienas Lapa (Day's Page), but in 1893 this newspaper became Marxist in outlook.[30]

This political movement could be understood in the context of social, economic and political developments in Russia. Up to 1887, the Russian authorities allowed the Latvians to keep their distinctive customs, traditions and the language. After 1887, during the reign of Alexander III, 1881-94, Latvia was subjected to ruthless Russification,[31] which the Latvians resisted.

By the end of the nineteenth century the Latvians had acquired

about forty per cent of the agricultural land. With increased prosperity the standards of education in the schools rose. The Latvian educated class became more numerous, more influential and more active. This new elite kept its own customs and spoke its language and became more conscious of its own national identity. It can be said that the national awakening of the Latvians emerged as a result of an effort by the Latvian nationalists to create a modern intellectual milieu which would make it possible to build a new cultural and intellectual superstructure. However, these efforts were not without failures.

After 1897 when nearly all the leaders of the various movements were arrested, the work continued underground; and as the labour movement continued to grow in strength, and as the unrest spread among the workers, illegal Marxist groups were formed which became the foundation of the Latvian Social Democratic Workers Party in 1904. Although illegal, its membership steadily increased; to many Latvians at that time socialism was the ideal of the future.

> Its principal leaders were J. Jansons, J. Ozols and J. Asars. It was natural that the industrial workers should be the first to join a Latvian revolutionary movement. However, in the Revolution of 1905 all kinds of people took part including middle-class people, intellectuals and, to a certain extent, even the well to do. In a historic sense it was a bourgeois and national revolution, for the entire nation fought the national and social oppressors.[32]

The Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party received strong support from a great majority of the Latvian people. One of its aims was to free the country both from Russian rule and German economic and cultural domination and to fight for independence. The Latvians took the opportunity to rise in revolt in 1905 and fought under the red flag

of the parties of the left. They attacked all Russian institutions. Attacks were also made on the estates of the Baltic German aristocracy. In the country the manor houses were burned down and much property of the German nobility was destroyed. The German nobility appealed to the Tsar for protection and the authorities sent Cossack regiments to suppress the uprising. The result was much bloodshed with many leaving the country to escape imprisonment and Siberian exile. The Revolution of 1905 in Latvia was suppressed by the vastly superior Russian military forces, yet Latvians emerged with a new feeling of strength.[33]

Further developments were accelerated by the outbreak of the First World War. Latvia became a battleground. In the early stages of the war, after initial successes, the Russian army suffered a series of disasters, and as a result of defeats on the Eastern Front the German armies occupied part of Latvia. About one third of the population left their homes and suffered the life of refugees in Russia. Latvian men enlisted in the Russian army and fought on the Russian side. Despite the intrigues on the part of the Baltic nobility, an order was given by the Russian authorities on August 1, 1915, for the creation of the Latvian Rifle Regiments of volunteers; some 130,000 men enlisted and played an important part in the development of a sense of national unity.

The official Latvian red-white-red striped flag was designed and approved by the organization of the Rifle Regiments in 1916.[34] These Latvian Rifle Regiments fought the Germans on the Riga front in a number of battles from 1916 to 1917. On September 3, Riga fell, and most of the Latvian troops were demobilized, and the remainder retreated into Russia where they played an important part in the events of the 1917 Revolution.[35]

Before the Russian Revolution of 1917, even before 1914, a number of Latvian patriots had been devising plans for Latvia's future. On October 29, 1917, the Provisional Latvian National Council was formed. At its first congress held on November 16 to 19 at Valka, representatives of the Kurzeme and Latgale Provincial Councils took part. In addition, representatives of most of the Latvian national, social, political and economic organizations were present. The Congress resolved that Latvia was an autonomous and indivisible unit, whose internal form of government and foreign relations should be decided by its Constituent Assembly.[36] However, by the Russo-German Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, signed March 3, 1918, the territory of Latvia was divided. Germany retained Kurzeme and Riga; the question of Vidzeme remained undecided, though its inhabitants were granted the right to self-determination; and Latgale was ceded to Russia.[37] The Latvians protested the provision of the Treaty.

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was however short-lived. The Article 14 of the Armistice, signed on November 11, 1918 between the Allied Powers and Germany, dealt with the Baltic states.[38] Article 433 of the Versailles Treaty abrogated the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The British Government recognized Latvia de facto on November 11, 1918.[39]

On November 17, 1918 the representatives of the Provisional National Council and the Democratic Bloc convened in Riga and decided to form the Latvian People's Council, and Jānis Čakste was elected its President and Kārlis Ulmanis Prime Minister. On November 18, 1918 the independent State of Latvia was proclaimed, and a statement of political principles was adopted by the People's Council on the same day. It included two short constitutional provisions: (1) Latvia was to be a

democratic republic; it was united (meaning that the Latvian-inhabited areas - Vidzeme, Kurzeme and Latgale - formed one state), sovereign, independent with membership in the League of Nations, and (2) the two supreme governmental bodies were to be the People's Council and the Provisional Government. The parliamentary system was thus introduced into Latvia even before the adoption of a constitution.[40]

Latvia had to defend its newly-won freedom against the Soviet Red Army and German irregular troops in the War of Independence of 1918 to 1920.[41] The Provisional Government had to move to Jelgava and from there to Liepāja. The Government was supported by the first Latvian military formation, a battalion which was the nucleus of the Latvian army. The armed forces of Latvia were being organized under most difficult circumstances. The Red Army advanced into Latvia as early as the end of November, 1918.[42] On January 3, 1919, the Red Army entered Riga and Latvia was proclaimed a Soviet Republic without the right to conduct a plebiscite. However, the invasion of the Red Army into Latvia and the occupation did not last long. The front was stabilized at Venta (Kurzeme). General R. von der Goltz who was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the irregular German forces arrived in Liepāja. The counter-attack against the Red Army started March 3, 1919, with German irregulars, Baltic German Landeswehr and Latvian troops.[43] The Latvian national government, headed by K. Ulmanis, returned to Riga on July 8, 1919, and by the end of November the whole territory of Latvia was cleared of German troops. On January 3, 1920, the Latvian Army supported by Poles liberated Latgale from the Soviets.[44] Only then did the Latvians begin to rebuild their country.

A Constituent Assembly was elected. It met on May 1, 1920, after the country was cleared of the foreign invaders. Two years later, on May 1, 1922, a Constitution was adopted.[45] The legislative body consisted of one chamber, the Saeima, with one hundred members, elected for a period of three years by direct, secret and proportional ballot. The Saeima elected the President of the Republic by majority vote and could dismiss him by a two-thirds vote. The President had practically no power and his position in this respect was very similar to that of the royal power in a constitutional monarchy. The executive body, the cabinet of Ministers, received its power from the Saeima and could be overthrown by a simple majority vote.[46]

The Electoral Law allowed one hundred citizens to put up a list of candidates, and a group of seven citizens to register as a political party. The pattern of political parties was briefly as follows. The right-wing included the Farmer's Union, Catholics, and a number of very small parties. The centre was represented chiefly by the Democratic Centre, New Settlers, and the Right-Wing Socialists. The left-wing was represented by the Social Democratic Party which had about 22 of the 100 seats. The Communist party was outlawed.[47] Since all the natural resources, including forests, railways and public utilities, were owned by the State or the municipalities, the issues between the right and left-wing parties were largely confined to social and agrarian legislation, taxation, commercial policy, chiefly tariff rates, and educational questions. Ethnic minorities (Germans, Jews, Russians and Poles) played an important part in the Parliament and at times occupied key positions, since in none of the five Latvian Parliaments (including the Constituent

Assembly) did either the right or the left-wing parties have a clear majority. The radical minorities were chiefly concerned with their own interests. Such matters made it difficult for the country to form a strong and stable government. As historian Dr. Spekke has pointed out, an extremely liberal and almost too democratic Constitution was agreed upon. It provided for an assembly of one hundred members, in which at one time there were as many as twenty-seven political parties represented.[48]

The economic crisis of 1929 began to be felt in the country about 1931. Although its effect in Latvia, an essentially agricultural country, was less violent than in Western Europe and North America, unemployment and foreign trade restrictions followed. However, it was felt that many of the economic difficulties were due, partly at least, to the nature of the constitution and the instability of the government. The right-wing and most of the centre parties felt that the Constitution of 1922 had to be amended with the view of ensuring government stability. The Parliament could not agree on the new amendments.

On May 15, 1934, K. Ulmanis, who was then the Prime Minister in a right-wing-centre coalition government, staged a bloodless coup d'état, dismissed the Saeima and decreed that until the drawing up of a new Constitution, the Cabinet of Ministers would, on the basis of Article 81 of the Constitution (this article provided that when the Saeima was not in session the Cabinet could issue laws which had subsequently to be confirmed by the Saeima), also act as the legislative body. A new government was formed with Ulmanis as the Prime Minister. He retained this post until 1940. Ulmanis outlawed all political parties and

restricted the freedom of the press. The authoritarian regime thus instituted lasted until the beginning of the Second World War.[49]

Despite the political instability, Latvia was making progress in the economic and cultural spheres. About three-fourths of the population of the country before the Second World War were Latvians by descent and language. The remaining quarter consisted of ethnic minorities, of whom the most numerous were Russians, Jews, Germans and Poles.[50] The minorities enjoyed political rights and full cultural autonomy. About 56% of the population belonged to the Lutheran church, 25.5% were Roman Catholic, and 9% were Greek Orthodox. The church was separated from the state. However, the Ministry of the Interior included a Board of Ecclesiastical Affairs which dealt with matters relating to religion. Offences against an individual's religious observance were forbidden by law. The many religious denominations and congregations could receive State and municipal subsidies in the same way as lay organizations. Denominational schools fell under the same jurisdiction as the private schools.[51]

Elementary education was compulsory and free. About 15% of the national budget was spent on education. During the last year of free Latvia 1939-40, there were over 2,000 elementary schools with an enrolment of 275,000 pupils, 110 high schools with 25,000 students, and 125 trade schools with 10,000 students. The total number of elementary and secondary school teachers reached 13,800. The University of Riga had an enrolment of more than 6,500 students and faculty of 400.[52] Other institutions of higher learning were: The Academy of Agriculture, The Academy of Fine Arts, a Music Conservatory and an English and French Institute. Illiteracy was virtually non-existent.

Fine arts, literature and music flourished in the climate of freedom. In 1939 in this nation of two million, 1,300 books were published a year; there were 54 newspapers, 150 magazines, two opera houses, 12 theatres, and some 100 movie houses.[53] Prominent among the memorable national traditions were song festivals. In the years of national independence these reached their peak in artistic achievements and popular appeal. In 1938, the ninth Song Festival in Riga, with 16,000 singers in national costumes attracted an audience of 200,000 or 10% of Latvia's total population. The last song festival in free Latvia took place on June 16, 1940.[54]

In twenty short years Latvia's achievements had been considerable in the fields of agriculture, industry, merchant marine, and education. A new network of railroads and highways interlaced the country. Latvia's financial situation was sound in spite of the world-wide economic crisis of the thirties. Latvia's standard of living was one of the highest in East-Central Europe. The government enacted progressive social security legislation, which provided full insurance to workers and their families in the event of illness, occupational accidents and unemployment. However, there were problems, and the most serious ones for the Latvian people were internal political instability, and the developments on the international scene.

On August 23, 1939 von Ribbentrop and V. I. Molotov signed the German-Russian Non-Aggression Pact.[55] The secret protocols of the Pact allotted Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to Russia, and on September 1, 1939, Germany unleashed the horrors of the Second World War with its Blitzkrieg attack on Poland. Latvia, the small nation that had always

led a precarious existence, found herself once again at the crossroads of the two great powers. During the last quarter of 1939, about 50,000 Latvian citizens of German origin, responding to the call of the German Fuehrer, left Latvia for Germany.[56] Events followed at an accelerated pace. The Soviet occupation started on June 17, 1940 and Latvia was incorporated in the Soviet Union. The Soviet occupation of Latvia came to an abrupt end with the start of the Russo-German War on June 22, 1941. Within a few days (on July 1), the Germans took Riga and soon all Latvia was under German occupation which lasted until 1944. In the wake of the retreating German forces, the Red Army re-occupied Riga on October 13, 1944, and after Germany's capitulation on May 8, 1945, the Soviet regime was re-established in Latvia. Some 40,000 Latvian Legionnaires surrendered to the Western Allies and close to 130,000 Latvian civilians chose exile in the free world.[57] The annexation of Latvia by the Soviet Union was the most decisive factor leading to the mass exodus of Latvians to the West; a number of the Latvian exiles found their way to Canada and Alberta.

An attempt was made here to provide a short outline of the history of Latvia and the Latvians. The periods of subservience to one or another powerful neighbour and the short period of independence left an imprint on the Latvian people. The immigrants who came to Alberta after the Second World War brought with them the culture and the political traditions of their homeland. The story of the immigrants' adjustment to their new adopted country and in particular to the Alberta environment can be better understood through the knowledge of the immigrants' past. The Albertan history of the Latvian community is the subject of the following chapter.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER II

1. J. Rutkis, ed., Latvia Country and People (Stockholm, Latvian National Foundation, 1967), p. 14.

2. Ibid., p. 17.

3. J. L. Morse, ed., Funk & Wagnalls Standard Reference Encyclopedia (New York, Standard Reference Works Publishing Company, 1963), Vol. 15, p. 5531.

4. Ibid., p. 5531.

5. Rutkis, op. cit., p. 637.

6. Ibid., p. 638. For more information on the Knights in Livonia, see A. Spekke, History of Latvia: An Outline (Stockholm, M. Goppers, 1951), pp. 120-148.

7. Rutkis, op. cit., p. 638.

8. Spekke, op. cit., pp. 178-180, for the development of Reformation in Livonia.

9. Rutkis, op. cit., p. 638. For information on The Duchy of Kurland, see Spekke, op. cit., pp. 242-257.

10. Spekke, op. cit., p. 192.

11. Rutkis, op. cit., p. 638.

12. Ibid., p. 638. In 1775 the Duke Peter Biron of Kurland founded in Jelgava, "the Academia Petrina", an institution of higher learning. The small Duchy of Kurland was almost independent and lasted two hundred and thirty three years, 1562-1795. For more information, see Spekke, op. cit., pp. 242-257.

13. Spekke, op. cit., pp. 233-241, for more information on Swedes in Livonia.

14. Ibid., p. 237.

15. Spekke, op. cit., p. 239.

16. Rutkis, op. cit., p. 638.

17. Spekke, op. cit., pp. 269-289.

18. E. Andersons, ed., Cross Road Country Latvia (Waverly, Iowa, U.S.A., Latvju Grāmata, 1953), p. 302; also in Spekke, op. cit., p. 294.

19. Spekke, op. cit., p. 294.

20. Ibid., p. 294.

21. Ibid., p. 308.

22. Andersons, op. cit., p. 304.

23. Spekke, op. cit., p. 298.

24. Ibid., p. 305.

25. Ibid., p. 306.

26. Andersons, op. cit., p. 304.

27. Spekke, op. cit., p. 307.

28. Ibid., p. 60.

29. Rutkis, op. cit., p. 502.

30. Spekke, op. cit., p. 311.

31. Andersons, op. cit., p. 306. Alexander III, a rabid slavophile, in 1887 made Russian the language of instruction in Baltic elementary schools, introduced the Russian Police laws in 1888 and instituted a new system of law courts with Russian judges in 1889. "In order to weaken the influence of the national leaders, young Latvian graduates were sent away to Russia. Thus in 1891-1900, fifty-four per cent of all the Baltic university graduates were employed in Russia" (p. 306).

32. Spekke, op. cit., p. 311.

33. For information on 1905 Revolution see Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, A History of Russia (New York, Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 448-453.

34. Spekke, op. cit., p. 330.

35. Rutkis, op. cit., p. 639. For the Revolution of 1917, see Riasanovsky, op. cit., pp. 503-512.

36. Spekke, op. cit., p. 342.

37. Ibid., p. 343.

38. Ibid., p. 343.

39. Ibid., p. 344.

40. Rutkis, op. cit., p. 221.

41. Spekke, op. cit., p. 347.

42. Ādolfs Klīve, Brīvā Latvija (New York, Grāmatu Draugs pub. 1969), p. 384.

43. Spekke, op. cit., p. 350.

44. Ibid., pp. 349-355.

45. Ibid., p. 373.

46. Ibid., p. 373. For information about Latvia's government and constitution, see also Rutkis, op. cit., pp. 216-251.

47. Spekke, op. cit., p. 374. For information on Latvian political parties, see Georg von Rauch, The Baltic States (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1970), pp. 91-97.

48. Spekke, op. cit., p. 375.

49. von Rauch, op. cit., pp. 151-161.

50. Rutkis, op. cit., p. 302. The Latvian population at the beginning of 1939 was 2 million.

51. Rutkis, op. cit., p. 616. For information on religious denominations in Latvia, see pp. 616-627.

52. Ibid., p. 566. On Latvian education, see pp. 566-615; also in Spekke, op. cit., pp. 370-371.

53. Rutkis, op. cit., p. 522.

54. Ibid., p. 539. For Latvian culture, see also A. Šilde, Latvijas Vēsture (Stockholm, Daugava, 1976), pp. 638-674. During the period of free Latvia the Archives had collected about 2,308,000 texts, comprising 775,257 folksongs, 300,905 fairy tales, and anecdotes, 47,865 legends, 450,313 riddles, 244,432 proverbs and sayings, 344,196 folk beliefs, 48,442 magic formulas, and 65,478 variants of folk health-remedy formulas. To supplement these figures, it should be stated that by January 7, 1937, the Archives had also collected 67,936 nursery rhymes, 9,520 descriptions of games and dances, 13,093 folk melodies, 5,087 names of persons and places, 210 house signs and tombstone inscriptions, 922 descriptions of historical places, 200 drawings and photographs and 2,719 animal and plant names.

55. von Rauch, op. cit., pp. 209-212.

56. Spekke, op. cit., p. 383.

57. Rutkis, op. cit., p. 640.

CHAPTER III

THE LATVIANS IN ALBERTA

It is impossible to establish the time of arrival of the first Latvian immigrant in Alberta, because there is no recorded proof. The pieces of information on the first immigration movements have been put together here by relying on information about the first Latvians who settled in Alberta, which came from the United States.

From the available information it seems that the majority of the Latvian immigrants of the first wave arrived in Alberta in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century. Most came to Canada and Alberta via the United States. Some were sailors in the Tsarist navy who jumped ship in American ports. Other early immigrants preferred life abroad to long services in the Russian army and fled their homeland because of this. All known immigrants came from peasant stock. Their first occupations were given as farm labourers, sailors, factory workers, but most were peasants with a very low level of education. Nevertheless, they all knew how to read and write, and all learned the English language. Some were particularly articulate and wrote about their lives and their communities to the Latvian newspapers in the United States.[1]

The immigrants settled in Alberta because of the agricultural potential of the Canadian West that had lain dormant for centuries unrecognized and unproven. The Prime Minister of the new nation, John A. Macdonald, recognized that a transcontinental railway line linking the East to the West was an urgent requirement in order to implement his land

settlement policy. Without a populated prairie region, Canada could not be a viable unit either politically or economically. But Canada's highly selective immigration policy, the worldwide depression from 1870 to the 1890's, and the debt incurred by the C.P.R. worked together to defeat Macdonald's dream of a populated West. Only with the revival of world trade in the late 1890's, the scarcity of land in Europe and the United States, new immigration policies of the Laurier Government and the demand for wheat on the world market, did waves of immigrants pour into the Canadian West to fill the vacant homesteads.

In 1890 there was already a Latvian community established at Josephsburg, Alberta, thirty miles from Medicine Hat.[2] Pastor Hans Rebane[3] from Boston, Massachusetts, established the Latvian Lutheran Congregation (Svētā Pētera Draudze) at Josephsburg on July 4, 1897.[4] Rebane was of Estonian-Latvian parentage and spoke both languages. He left Latvia because of the religious discrimination policies of the Tsarist government against Lutherans.

> 1896 January. The Reverend Hans Rebane arrived in New York at the invitation of the German Missouri Lutheran Synod to become the pastor to Estonians and Latvians of Lutheran faith in the United States. His first efforts to establish contact with his flock in the major eastern cities from Baltimore to Boston yielded very few Estonians but a larger number of Latvians. Rebane reported that most (members of his congregation) held low-paying domestic or factory jobs.[5]

Rebane carried his mission across the continent and also into Canada until his death in 1911.

In 1903 a church was built to house the congregation in Josephsburg. This was the first church to be built by Latvian settlers in Canada. The

church was shared by a Latvian and a German Lutheran congregation under Reverend Sillak.[6] However, by 1905 the first congregation had already split up, because some of its most active members moved to Edmonton. One of these immigrants was John Jones, who, with his family, arrived in Edmonton in 1905.

Jones' story is most interesting in that it illustrates the problems that were facing the newly arrived immigrants. After staking his homestead on the north shore of the Isle Lake (sixty miles west of Edmonton), Jones returned to Edmonton to work for two years as a bricklayer to save enough money to be able to move out to his homestead in December 1907. There were no other white settlers in the area - only two Indian families living on the eastern shores of the Lake Isle - and Jones was anxious to get some of his compatriots to join him in Canada. Since filing for his homestead, he had been in continuous correspondence with other Latvians both at home in Russia and abroad in the United States and Canada urging them to move to Lake Isle. Within the next few years, there was a large Latvian community of twenty-five families (about one hundred and twenty-five people) established at Lake Isle. In this community, many of the old Latvian customs and traditions continued to flourish despite the transition to Western Canada. The Latvian settlers built a one room school, a community hall, and also a store in the small center called Lake Isle. In 1910, the school had one teacher to instruct all the children of the homesteaders in the vicinity. Latvian was the common language used at home although English was used in the schools and businesses. The hall was used for various functions, church gatherings, dances, weddings, and other occasions. The homes reflected the various

regions of Latvia. Some of the log homes sported dove-tailed corners and hewed logs; other houses had the logs left in the round with overhanging corners. But in all homes, the bottom log was left intact across the doorway forcing people to step over the log to gain entrance to the buildings. Muskeg or moss was used in the few cracks which remained after the tightly fitted logs were drilled and held together with wooden pegs. The steeply pitched roofs were covered by handmade wooden boards crossed both horizontally and vertically across the roofline. A few of the families built a pirts or a bath house, on the shores of the lake. Birch sap was collected to make the traditional sweet, non-alcoholic drink of birch water. But not all customs survived. Traditional dress was neglected. The interior of the homes indicated other modifications. The large cement oven-furnace unit common in rural Latvian houses was replaced by the simpler wood stove available at any hardware store in Edmonton. Furniture was crudely made and showed none of the finer decorative work which adorned the tables and chairs of the homes in Latvia. But then the life of the pioneer homesteader was hard and did not allow much time for fancy things.

John Jones was very active in community affairs. Many times he organized a crew to build roads and to complete other projects. He was also very active in the community's social life. He often wrote stories about the Lake Isle community, and submitted them to various newspapers, including those in independent Latvia. In 1923, he wrote a long article in the Edmonton Journal entitled "The Call of the North."

John Jones was very well liked among his neighbours, including the other new Canadian settlers. He was asked to organize the first election

in the Lake Isle district. He was also elected the district's judge, mayor, and notary public; positions that he held for many years.[7]

During the 1905 Revolution in Tsarist Russia and its aftermath, many Latvian political exiles sought refuge first in the United States and then in Canada. These immigrants had all been very active in Latvia in the unsuccessful revolution, and they had to leave because of fear of reprisals.

> 1905. This was the year of unsuccessful revolution in Latvia, against Russian repressions both economic and cultural. Because of severe Czarist reprisals, about five thousand young Latvian Socialist Revolutionaries fled their homeland and began to arrive in this country. The number of Latvians in the U.S.A. doubled.[8]

The immigrants who came after 1905 were better educated and became very active in the Latvian communities in Alberta. The most prominent community member in Alberta was Charles Plavin.[9] In February of 1911 he came to Canada after spending five years in San Francisco, and in April put in his claim for a 160 acre homestead at Lake Isle. Charles Plavin was a bachelor and remained single all his life. He was restless and in 1916 left his homestead and moved to Crowsnest Pass in southern Alberta, where he worked as a surveyor. By 1920, Charles Plavin had saved money to buy some very fertile land in the Peace River district, close to a small village called North Star. This Latvian immigrant's contribution to Alberta is as follows: in 1962, he donated 40,000 dollars and his farm of five sections of land to the University of Alberta to provide student scholarships in the Faculty of Arts. The scholarships are to be given to students from the Peace River District studying music. Since 1962, when these scholarships were founded, sixty

students have benefited from his generosity. The farm land was sold by the University a few years ago because it was too difficult for the Faculty of Agriculture to look after it. The money obtained from the sale of the land, around 145,000 dollars, was used by the University of Alberta for student scholarships. However, five acres and all the buildings were taken over in 1976 by the Province of Alberta, as a historic site, and the buildings are in the process of being restored. Plavin died in 1969 at the age of ninety-four and is buried in the North Star cemetary.

The Latvians in Alberta followed closely the developments in the Latvian communities in the United States. The contacts were made possible through newspapers that were published in the States as early as 1906. The Latvian newspaper Strādnieks (The Worker) appeared in Boston with a circulation of up to three thousand copies three times a week. It ceased to exist in 1919.[10] Another newspaper, a prominent socialist paper, was Proletārietis (The Proletarian) published in New York from 1914 to 1917.[11]

> A split in the ranks of the American Latvian socialist had begun in 1919, causing reorganization throughout the Latvian communities. Radical socialists affiliated themselves with the communist party as the Latvian Workers Union, which was formed in New York and evolved a membership of 1,000 throughout Canada and the U.S.A. They published a radical socialist newspaper Strādnieku Rīts (Workers Morning).[12]

A Latvian Communist newspaper, Amerikas Cīna (America's Struggle), published in Chicago from 1926 until 1929, is a source of information about the second wave of immigrants arriving in Edmonton from free Latvia. The Latvian communist and radical socialist newspaper Amerikas Latvieši (American Latvians) was founded in Boston in 1940 and survived until

1955[13], when most of the old revolutionary correspondents died. It also contains information helpful in putting together the story of Latvian immigration to Alberta.

By 1921, according to the Canadian Census, there were 156 Latvians in Alberta and the largest community of 125 was Lake Isle, about sixty miles west of Edmonton. The rest were scattered across Alberta, some bought homesteads, others were working as tradesmen in Edmonton. The Lake Isle community made great efforts to maintain its identity, but the survival of the small ethnic group was in jeopardy because the immigrants found farming life too hard and as a result began to sell their farms and move into cities and to other parts of Canada.

The second wave of immigrants from Latvia arrived in Edmonton in 1927 and 1928, in the inter-war period. The group consisted of five families: Peterson, Janiten, Toms, Dobelis, and Saulite. These new immigrants left Latvia when it was an independent state. The reasons for leaving were various but mostly personal. The five families stayed in Edmonton and were engaged in various occupations; three of them later established very successful businesses, but all went through great hardships in the depression years. The Lake Isle community, "the old Latvians," looked upon the new arrivals and could not understand them. The new immigrants were a different breed of men - better educated and with good trade jobs. They also had a different political outlook from that of the "old Latvian" revolutionaries who settled in the area of Lake Isle. The disappointment on meeting was great and the two groups never found a common ground. Their ideological differences were too great. This might be the reason why there were no Latvian associations to unite the

group until 1947. From 1929 to 1946, no immigrants arrived from Latvia. Two main reasons explain this: first, the depression years and the Canadian immigration laws; and second, the beginning of the Second World War.

The third wave of immigrants, the most numerous, arrived after the Second World War. Most of the Alberta Latvians found themselves in displaced persons' camps in Germany after the war, and came as immigrants to Alberta in the years following 1946. According to statistical data gathered in the 1976/1977 survey, during the period from 1946 to 1958, a total of 217 persons of Latvian origin came to Alberta. This is an unreliable figure because some have since moved away from Alberta, as the majority of them did not have any close relatives in the Province. However, Latvians who had resided in Alberta before the Second World War did much to help them establish themselves and to adapt to the new life in Canada. The most helpful member of the old Latvian community was John Jones,[14] who found sponsors from across Canada for two hundred Latvians from displaced persons' camps in Germany and Belgium. Another immigrant, Peter Janiten[15], sponsored twenty-nine new immigrants and gave them work in his greenhouses. The only one still alive from the old Latvian community who sponsored the newcomers is Tom Peterson, who sponsored sixteen new Latvian immigrants and gave them work on his farm near Pigeon Lake.

In addition to Jones, Janiten and Peterson, the families of Dobell, Toms and Saulit deserve a great deal of credit for helping the post World War II immigrants to adjust to the new surroundings. It is safe to say that none of the newly arrived post World War II immigrants have

experienced serious difficulties in finding suitable employment and building a new life in Alberta.

It could be argued that the educational level of the 217 new immigrants was a very important factor for satisfactory adjustment. Among these immigrants was a large proportion of professionally trained people, and for this reason, after the initial problems of settlement were overcome, they have been able to integrate successfully into the fabric of the Canadian society. Very few of the post-1945 immigrants went into farming. The majority entered the professions as engineers, doctors, dentists, lawyers, teachers, contractors and businessmen, putting to use their educational training obtained in Latvia prior to their immigration to Canada.

The post-Second World War immigrants have also been the most active ones in organizing the life of Latvians in Edmonton and Calgary. Until their arrival, there were no Latvian organizations in Alberta.

Today, the Latvian community is served in Edmonton by the Latvian Society Imanta.[16] The society was formed in 1947. A small group of Latvians (about seventy at present) formed in 1948, in Calgary, the Latvian society Daugava,[17] which is still in existence.

In addition, the Latvians in Alberta are associated with an international Latvian organization, the Latvian welfare organization Daugavas vanagi (D.V.) - (The Eagles of Daugava). This organization was founded by displaced persons of Latvian origin in Belgium at the end of the Second World War, with the purpose of taking care of needy Latvian war invalids. Subsequently, branches of the organization have been established in other countries, including Canada and the United States. In

Canada, there are nineteen branches, of which the Edmonton, Calgary and Red Deer Branches were established in 1954. In Canada, the organization's activities were broadened to include political activity, aimed at promoting the cause of Latvian independence through observance of the November 18th National Remembrance Day, and dissemination of information to keep the public aware of developments in Latvia (The Latvian S.S.R.). To this end, the organization published an international monthly magazine, Daugavas Vanagu Menešraksts (Daugavas Vanagu Monthly), in Toronto which contains a broad range of information that is of interest to Latvians in general, and to members of the organization in particular. A very important activity of this organization in Canada is the maintenance of its official organ, Latvija Amerikā (Latvia in America), the only Latvian language newspaper published regularly in Canada. This newspaper is the result of the merger of several earlier Latvian newspapers founded after 1946 in response to the needs of post-Second World War immigrants. The paper is published in Canada and in the United States, and its head office is in Toronto. It is a weekly, and publishes world news, as well as items of local interest to Latvians in Canada and the United States.

The Alberta Latvian community is served also by the newspaper Laiks (Time), another major regular Latvian press organ in the U.S.A., established in 1949 in Brooklyn, New York. This newspaper is published twice weekly and is the most widely read paper among Latvians in the free world today. A very active young people's group was established in 1967 in Edmonton, Daina, which participates in Canadian and Latvian social and cultural functions.

The Latvian organizations are linked together under an umbrella organization, the Latvian National Federation in Canada (L.N.A.K). This is a highly structured body founded in 1950, designed to represent the community in its contacts with government and other ethnic groups. The organization is divided into departments dealing with such matters as politics, information, culture, education and welfare. L.N.A.K. encompasses almost all of the fundamental aspects of the Latvian community life. It plays a political role by promoting the long range goal of independence for Latvia, and in so doing often collaborates with the umbrella organizations of the other two Baltic ethno-cultural groups in Canada, the Estonian and the Lithuanian. In addition, it supports cultural activities, supervises Latvian language Saturday Schools (Alberta does not have any), prepares textbooks and trains teachers as part of its programme to preserve the Latvian heritage in Canada. At present, its headquarters are in Toronto, but numerous branches exist across Canada, wherever there are large numbers of Latvians, including Edmonton.

Though it would be impossible to catalogue all of the contributions made by Latvians in Canada to the cultural, political and economic life of this country, particularly in the visual arts, ballet and serious music, at least the most characteristic Latvian cultural activity, the song festival, should be mentioned. However, the Latvian community in Alberta, because of its size, collectively can contribute very little to the larger community. The Edmonton folkdance group is the only representative of Latvian culture in Alberta's multicultural mosaic. The Latvian community in Alberta is best known through individual contacts of Latvians with other Albertans.

The idea of the Latvian Song Festival, like so many other national traditions, was transplanted to Canada by the post-Second World War immigrants. It was not until September 1952 that the idea became reality and some 2,000 Latvians came together, from all parts of Canada, in Massey Hall, Toronto, to attend this unique cultural celebration. A second festival took place in Toronto in 1957, with some 600 singers performing the traditional melodies as well as works by contemporary Latvian composers settled in Canada. Accompanying the festival were instrumental concerts, literary lectures, and fine arts exhibitions. This unique cultural event has been repeated every three to five years, mostly in Toronto, the last one in 1975, with some 1,300 singers and 800 folk dancers from across Canada (including the Edmonton group Daina) and the United States.

The Latvian Song Festival has now become a permanent part of Latvian cultural activities, not only in Canada, but also in the United States. A parallel Latvian song festival has been held every three to five years in various American cities starting in 1953. The most successful by far was the fifth song festival, held in Cleveland, Ohio in 1973. Coinciding with the centennial of the first such festival held in Riga in 1873, this particular celebration was attended by 15,000 Latvians from around the globe, and the occasion marked a high point in Latvian cultural activities. Not only were there a host of new works by Latvian composers presented, but some 900 folk dancers in national costumes presented authentic Latvian dances; various other literary and scholarly events also took place. However, as song festivals for Latvian Canadians are held mostly in Toronto, Latvians from Alberta wanting to

participate can do so to a limited extent.

In this chapter the three phases of Latvian immigration to Alberta were examined. Of the lives of the first old immigrants very little can be said, for they made no attempt to record their own stories and the official documentation of their lives in Alberta is either fragmented or unobtainable. Some data were nonetheless uncovered in this research.

The second phase of Latvian immigrants (1927-1928) to Alberta differed from the first as it was not composed exclusively of agriculturalists, but of different social classes. The depression years caused the complete halt of Latvian immigration to Alberta until the end of the Second World War.

The third phase of Latvian immigration to Alberta started in 1946. These political refugees were not voluntary emigrants like the peasants of a half century earlier. Most likely they would never have left their homeland if it had not been for events that took place during the Second World War. Conscious of the fact that they could not return home, this last group of Latvian immigrants was determined to become Canadian as quickly as possible, whatever the cost.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER III

1. M. Karklis, L. Streips, L. Streips, ed., The Latvians in America 1640-1973 (New York, Oceana Publications, Inc., 1974), p. 2. 1888, August 15. A group of seven men, led by Jacob Sieberg (1863-1963), a master carpenter by trade, settled in Boston, Massachusetts. This date can be considered as the beginning of regular Latvian immigration in the United States. Sieberg organized the first Latvian Evangelical Church, and a secular society, and came to be known as "Father of Latvians." He was the editor of the newspaper Amerikas Vēstnesis (American Herald) and an author of seven books, among them a handbook for the study of English. This marks the beginning of documented and organized Latvian community life in the United States of America.

2. Information in Heinz Lehman, Das Deutschtum in West Kanada, (Berlin, Junker and Dünnhaupt Verlag, 1939), pp. 74, 207, 225.

3. Karklis, op. cit., p. 4. (Rebane, born in 1863, Valka, Latvia, died in 1911, Boston, Massachusetts).

4. Information from Latvian newspaper, O. Akmentins, "Eksperiments ar 4000 Latviešiem" (Experiment with 4000 Latvians), in Latvija Amerikā (Toronto, 25 January, 1969), p. 4.

5. Jaan Pennar, ed., The Estonians in America 1627-1975 (New York, Oceana Publications, Inc., 1975), p. 4.

6. Akmentins, op. cit., p. 4.

7. For more information on John Jones, see T. Yedlin, ed., Alberta's Pioneers from Eastern Europe: Reminiscences (Edmonton, University of Alberta, Spring, 1977), pp. 27-32.

8. Karklis, op. cit., p. 6.

9. For information on Charles Plavin, see T. Yedlin, op. cit., pp. 33-36.

10. Karklis, op. cit., p. 7.

11. Ibid., p. 11.

12. Ibid., p. 17.

13. Ibid., pp. 21 & 28.

14. John Jones died in Edmonton in 1958 at the age of 88.

15. Peter Janiten died in Edmonton in 1962.

16. Imanta is the name taken from a Latvian legend symbolizing the unity of Latvians. Imanta, the main character in the legend, is a strong man who has been resting in Latvian Hills (Zilā Kalnā) for centuries and is waiting for a time when he will be able to come back and unite the nation.

17. Daugava is the name of the largest river in Latvia.

18. Information on Latvian Associations and Latvian song festivals in Canada, Multiculturalism Directorate, The Canadian Family Tree (Don Mills, Corpus, 1979), pp. 149-151.

CHAPTER IV

THE SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LATVIANS IN ALBERTA

In this chapter the social characteristics of the Latvian-Canadians in Alberta will be examined. The discussion will centre around the statistical data that were obtained from a questionnaire administered to the members of Alberta's Latvian community. The data base consists of 326 completed questionnaires (see Appendix). As will become evident from the analysis of the data, the process of acculturation of the Latvian community in Alberta has been a continuing one.

For the purpose of getting a clearer picture of the degree of acculturation (or assimilation) of the Latvian community in Alberta, as well as making some generalizations as to the possibility (or lack of it) of survival of a small ethnocultural group in a different environment, it was decided to divide the Latvian community in Alberta into three subgroups.[1] The first group consists of those immigrants who at the time of response were fifty-five years old or older. These immigrants were designated as the "Latvian" group, provided they left Latvia when they were eleven years old or older. The second subgroup designated as "Mixed" (Canadian and Latvian) consists of those immigrants who were under the age of fifty-five at the time of the survey and had been under the age of eleven when they left Latvia. The third subgroup designated as the "Canadian" are children born of Latvian immigrants in Canada. The percentage breakdown of the responding population of 326 is as follows: the "Latvian" subgroup constitutes 38%, the "Mixed" subgroup 23%, and the "Canadian" subgroup 33%. These three subgroups therefore constitute

94% (306) of the identified and responding Latvian community in Alberta.

The remaining six percent had configurations of age and length of stay in Latvia which were difficult to classify into subgroups; they were excluded from the analysis in this chapter.

By examining the data obtained from the three subgroups "Latvian," "Mixed" and "Canadian" one finds that the degree of acculturation, i.e., attitudes, customs, fluency in the native language, is closely related to membership in one of the three subgroups, and that the group born in Canada belongs only nominally to the Latvian community. The process of acculturation was fastest among Latvians born in Canada, a finding which affirms the hypothesis that the problem of survival of a small ethnic group is very difficult if not impossible. Factors not derived from the survey but no doubt reinforcing the assimilation process are the isolation of many of the Latvian immigrants from large metropolitan centers with concentrations of Latvians, and the absence of further immigration from the country of origin - Latvia.

The most important evidence regarding differences in the degree of acculturation of the three subgroups is derived from the replies to the question: "What language do you speak at home now in Canada?" (Table 4-1). In the "Canadian" subgroup nobody speaks Latvian at home exclusively, while 78% speak English only and 22% speak English and some Latvian. In contrast, in the "Latvian" subgroup, only 19% speak only English at home and in "Mixed" subgroup, 34% use only English. It comes as no surprise that in the "Latvian" group 64% speak only Latvian at home, while in the "Mixed" group, 42% speak only Latvian; in both subgroups there is a small percentage of those who speak both languages

at home - 15% of the "Latvian" and 24% of the "Mixed". Since language retention and preservation play a very important role in any ethnic group's survival, it can be seen from the data that the Latvian ethnic group is facing a difficult situation: four fifths of the Canadian born speak only English and it can be assumed that they do not know the Latvian language.

Table 4-1

Language Spoken in Canada, by Subgroup (vertical percent) (N=306)

	Subgroup		
Language	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
English	19.5	33.8	78.0
Latvian	65.0	41.9	0.0
Latvian and English	15.5	24.3	22.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Another measure of acculturation is church affiliation. To the question: "Are you a member of a Latvian or a Canadian church?" (Tables 4-2 and 4-3), the replies indicated that among the "Latvian" subgroup 75% belong to the Latvian church (Latvian church here means a Lutheran church where liturgy and sermons are in Latvian). Latvian church membership for the "Mixed" subgroup is 54%, and for the "Canadian" subgroup 31%.

Of the three subgroups, 19% of the "Latvian", 20% of the "Mixed" and 28% of the "Canadian" belong to a Canadian church (Canadian church here means a Lutheran church with English as the language of liturgy and sermon). The Latvian community has a small contingent (21%) of Roman

Catholics, all of whom are members of the Canadian Roman Catholic Church.

The lower percentage of any church member among the "Mixed" and "Canadian" subgroups, can be explained by the general trend towards a more secular society, which influenced the Latvian community also.

Table 4-2

Membership in Canadian Church, by Subgroup (vertical percent)
(N=306)

	Subgroup		
Member	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
Yes	19.4	20.3	28.7
No	80.6	79.7	71.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4-3

Membership in Latvian Church, by Subgroup (vertical percent)
(N=306)

	Subgroup		
Member	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
Yes	75.2	54.1	31.2
No	24.8	45.9	68.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Decline in membership in Latvian churches can be ascribed to the difficulty in organizing the community for the purpose of supporting a resident Latvian minister (pastor). A more important factor is that in Alberta the Latvian church administration and activities have not provided for specifically Latvian needs. Had Latvian churches been better

organized and had Sunday School instructions been provided, there would have been at least some upbringing of the young in the Latvian culture, language and tradition, which might have enabled the community to retain more of its ethno-cultural identity.

Further evidence with regard to the degree of acculturation can be obtained from the data that pertained to membership in Latvian and Canadian societies and clubs (Tables 4-4 and 4-5).

Table 4-4

Membership in Latvian Association, by Subgroup (vertical percent) (N=302)

	Subgroup		
Member	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
Yes	55.7	43.2	20.8
No	44.3	56.8	79.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4-5

Membership in Canadian Association, by Subgroup (vertical percent) (N=299)

	Subgroup		
Member	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
Yes	26.2	33.8	29.2
No	73.8	66.2	70.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

In comparing affiliation with Latvian and Canadian associations,[2] some significant variation within the three groups can be observed. At

the outset, however, it should be pointed out that the majority in all the three groups did not indicate and, in many cases, failed to mention, membership in trade, labour or student unions (all of which are, of course, Canadian associations), while among the "Latvian" subgroup 56% indicated that they were affiliated with Latvian associations; in the "Canadian" subgroup the decrease was by more than half, i.e., only 21% were members of a Latvian association. The "Mixed" subgroup was somewhere between the two others with 43% belonging to a Latvian association. One reason for the low percentage even among the "Latvian" subgroup seems to be the isolation of a community settled in Western Canada away from the major centres of Latvian immigrant settlements in Eastern Canada, a factor which allowed for (or was conducive to) the integration into the general fabric of Alberta society. In other words, the ghettoization factor was much smaller than in Toronto.

The membership in the Canadian associations presented a different picture. Among the "Latvian" subgroup, 26% belonged to various Canadian societies and organizations; 34% of the "Mixed" subgroup did, and 29% of the "Canadian" subgroup. It is important to note in this case that the "Canadian" group consisted mostly of students in various institutions and they did not indicate membership in various student unions. The small membership in Canadian associations of the "Latvian" subgroup is easily explained when one considers their background, and the strong allegiance to their own group. The "Mixed" subgroup with 34% belonging to various Canadian organizations apparently tried to combine the two cultures, bringing with them a degree of cultural consciousness and being concerned with adapting to the Canadian way of life.

Highly revealing information regarding the degree of acculturation is available from the following question: "Do you have more Latvian than Canadian friends?" (Table 4-6). Here, the replies indicated that only 4% of the "Canadian" subgroup had more Latvian than Canadian friends, while 90% had more Canadian than Latvian friends. In contrast to these figures, 65% of the "Latvian" subgroup indicated that they had more Latvian than Canadian friends and 24% had more Canadian friends. This is explained by taking into account the fact that language facility, common customs and traditions play a dominant role in the establishment of friendship ties. The "Mixed" subgroup here is to be found somewhere between the two others with 54% indicating that they had more Latvian friends and 39% stating that they had more Canadian friends.

Table 4-6

More Latvian or Canadian Friends, by Subgroup (vertical percent) (N=305)

	Subgroup		
More friends	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
Latvian	64.5	54.2	3.7
Canadian	24.2	38.9	89.9
Equal	11.3	6.9	6.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Further evidence of the difference in the degree of acculturation regarding the three groups discussed comes from replies to the question asking for the ethnicity of the respondent's best friends (Table 4-7). Of the "Canadian" subgroup 70% indicated that they have their best friends in Canadian society at large, while the "Mixed" subgroup had 18%

and the "Latvian" subgroup only 8% among Canadians of other than Latvian ethnicity. Among the "Latvian" subgroup, 50% had Latvians as best friends and in the "Mixed" subgroup, this was so with 25%. Nevertheless, a fairly large percentage in the "Latvian" subgroup (42%) and in the "Mixed" subgroup (58%) indicated that their best friends came from among both Latvian ethnics and other Canadians, while in the "Canadian" subgroup only 28% stated that they had their best friends in both ethnic groupings.

Table 4-7

Best Friends' Ethnicity, by Subgroup (vertical percent)
(N=307)

	Subgroup		
Best friends	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
Latvian	49.6	24.7	1.8
Canadian	8.0	17.8	69.7
Both	42.4	57.5	28.4
Total	100.0	100.0	99.9

Evidence as to the difference among the three subgroups considered comes also from the replies to the following two questions: "Do you read Latvian newspapers?" and "Do you read Canadian newspapers?" (Tables 4-8 and 4-9). Only 4% of the "Canadian" subgroup was still reading Latvian newspapers, but 54% in the "Mixed" subgroup and 61% in the "Latvian" subgroup were doing so. The Canadian newspapers were read to a high degree by all groups: 65% in the "Latvian", 79% in the "Mixed" and 60% in the "Canadian" subgroup.

Table 4-8

Reading of Latvian Newspapers, by Subgroup (vertical percent)
(N=301)

	Subgroup		
Reader	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
Yes	61.0	54.2	3.8
No	39.0	45.8	96.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4-9

Reading of Canadian Newspapers, by Subgroup (vertical percent)
(N=308)

	Subgroup		
Reader	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
No	34.4	21.6	40.4
One newspaper	58.4	68.9	49.5
Two or more newspapers	7.2	9.5	10.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Respondents were presented with five traditional value statements and asked whether they agreed or disagreed. Responses to the statement: "Children today do not show enough respect for their families" (Table 4-10) indicated acculturation away from the traditional values. Of the "Canadian" subgroup, 55% disagreed with the statement, but in the "Latvian" subgroup only 4%, while in the "Mixed" subgroup 16% disagreed. In the "Latvian" subgroup 86% agreed with the statement, in the "Mixed" subgroup, 73%, and in the "Canadian" subgroup, 32%.

Table 4-10

Childred today do not show enough respect for their families, by Subgroup (vertical percent) (N=304)

	Subgroup		
Response	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
Disagree strongly	0.8	0.0	1.8
Disagree	4.9	16.4	66.1
Agree	86.1	72.6	32.1
Agree strongly	8.2	11.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

The second statement was worded as follows: "Fathers used to be much stronger figures in the family than they are today" (Table 4-11). The replies followed the same trend, for only 36% of the "Canadian" subgroup agreed with this statement, while in the "Latvian" subgroup, 96% agreed and in the "Mixed" subgroup, 91%.

Table 4-11

Fathers used to be much stronger figures in the family, by Subgroup (vertical percent) (N=306)

	Subgroup		
Response	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
Disagree strongly	0.8	0.0	1.8
Disagree	2.4	9.6	60.6
Agree	85.4	79.5	35.8
Agree strongly	11.4	11.0	1.8
Total	100.0	100.1	100.0

In reply to the third statement: "When religion was more important, people had fewer personal problems" (Table 4-12), 86% of the "Canadian" subgroup disagreed, while the other two groups agreed with this statement, 84% of the "Latvian" and 77% of the "Mixed" subgroup.

Table 4-12

When religion was more important people had fewer personal problems, by Subgroup (vertical percent)
(N=304)

	Subgroup		
Response	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
Disagree strongly	0.8	2.7	6.4
Disagree	14.9	20.3	70.6
Agree	79.3	73.0	22.9
Agree strongly	5.0	4.1	0.0
Total	100.0	100.1	99.9

The fourth statement was: "There used to be more respect for the law than there is now" (Table 4-13). Here again, of the "Canadian" subgroup 62% disagreed and the two others agreed, 97% of each of the "Latvian" and the "Mixed" subgroup.

The fifth statement was designed to seek perceived correlation between church attendance and concern for others: "Now that fewer people go to church there is less concern for other people" (Table 4-14). In the "Canadian" group the replies indicated that 77% disagreed. The other two groups agreed to very large extents, 85% of the "Latvian" and 73% of the "Mixed" subgroup. The Latvian Albertan responses to these five traditional value statements can of course be explained partially by the

possibility that this kind of difference is due to a generational difference among all Canadians. However, one can assume that the generational differences of the Latvian Albertans are greater. The Latvian parents, all being immigrants, are conservative and tried to instill the old traditional values in their children. It has been difficult for the immigrants to adjust to the new Canadian cultural values and in particular to the new generation's subculture with rock concerts, disco dancing and space movies. As a result, the Latvian younger and older generations tend to be drawn farther and farther apart.

Table 4-13

There used to be more respect for the law than there is now, by Subgroup (vertical percent) (N=306)

	Subgroup		
Response	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
Disagree strongly	0.8	0.0	3.7
Disagree	2.4	2.7	57.8
Agree	78.0	70.3	35.8
Agree strongly	18.7	27.0	2.8
Total	99.9	100.0	100.1

The response received from the three subgroups regarding the question: "If you compare Latvian and Canadian culture, which one do you rate higher?" (Table 4-15) reinforced the picture that emerged on the basis of the data presented earlier. Of the "Latvian" subgroup, 79% rated Latvian culture higher than Canadian, 78% of the "Mixed" subgroup

Table 4-14

Now that fewer people go to church there is less concern for other people, by Subgroup (vertical percent)
(N=306)

	Subgroup		
Response	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
Disagree strongly	0.8	4.1	5.5
Disagree	14.2	23.0	71.6
Agree	80.8	67.6	22.9
Agree strongly	4.2	5.4	0.0
Total	100.0	100.1	100.0

Table 4-15

If you compare Latvian and Canadian culture, which one do you rate higher, by Subgroup (vertical percent)
(N=274)

	Subgroup		
Culture rating	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
Latvian higher	78.8	77.8	40.9
Canadian higher	14.4	15.9	48.4
Equal	6.8	6.3	10.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.1

believed the same and 41% of the "Canadian" subgroup still believed that Latvian culture was to be rated higher. The latter did so in spite of the fact that most of them do not speak Latvian and are culturally removed from the Latvian milieu. Yet the plurality of those born in Canada (48%) rated Canadian culture higher, another indication of the

process of acculturation.

To explain these findings some additional data have to be considered. First we will look at the age groups. Here, the data show that the Latvian culture was rated higher by those Latvian Albertans who were 45 years old and older. The Canadian culture was rated higher by the younger age groups, age 15 to 44.[3] Of female respondents, 67% rated the Latvian culture higher, while only 61% of the males did so. Of those who spoke Latvian at home, 89% rated the Latvian culture higher, while of those speaking English at home, 54% rated the Canadian culture higher. Similarly, when we look at the nationality of most of respondents' friends, of those with more Latvian friends, 80% rated the Latvian culture higher; of those with more Canadian friends, 49% gave Canadian culture a higher rating, as compared to 40% who rated Latvian culture higher. From the foregoing we can account for those who rated the Latvian culture higher: they tended to be forty-five years old or older, speak the Latvian language at home and have more Latvians as friends. On the other hand, those who rated Canadian culture higher tended to be in the younger age groups, speak English at home and have more Canadian than Latvian friends.

The overall answer to the question posed in the introductory chapter as to the probability of retaining one's ethnocultural identity when belonging to a small group is to be found in the response to this question: "What do you think you are: Latvian ethnic, Latvian-Canadian, or Canadian?" (Table 4-16). Only 13% of the "Latvian", 7% of the "Mixed" and none of the "Canadian" subgroup indicated that they consider themselves Latvian ethnics. Seventy-three percent of the "Latvian" subgroup and 71% of the "Mixed" subgroup considered themselves Latvian-Canadians.

Only 33% of the "Canadian" subgroup identified themselves as Latvian-Canadians, while 67% said that they were Canadians. In contrast, only 14% of the "Latvian" and 22% of the "Mixed" group considered themselves unhyphenated Canadians. Here again, we will look at some additional data, and first at the age groups. If we break respondents at the age of 45, we find that the older group considers itself overwhelmingly Latvian Canadian, with rather few Latvian ethnics and Canadians. The younger group has twice as many Canadians as Latvian Canadians, with only a negligible number of Latvian ethnics.[4] Of those who stated that they spoke Latvian at home, 68% identified as Latvian Canadians, 18% as Latvian ethnics and only 4% as Canadians. Conversely, of those speaking English at home, 69% identified as Canadians and 31% as Latvian Canadians. These data strongly support the case that those who speak more Latvian at home consider themselves Latvian-Canadian, and that those who speak English at home consider themselves Canadian.

Table 4-16

Ethnic Self-perception, by Subgroup (vertical percent)
(N=306)

Perceived ethnicity	Subgroup Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
Latvian ethnic	12.9	6.8	0.0
Latvian-Canadian	73.4	71.2	33.0
Canadian	13.7	21.9	67.0
Total	100.0	99.9	100.0

A very interesting phenomenon occurred when the question was asked: "Do your Canadian friends know you are a Latvian?". In all three subgroups including the "Canadian", 99% answered yes. Thus, regardless of the differing self-perception of the subgroups, virtually all identifiable Latvian Albertans feel that others do in fact perceive them as Latvian Canadians. These data could be explained in terms of the policy of multiculturalism. In Alberta particularly, the provincial government has been involved in furthering the policy of multiculturalism, which continues to emphasize everyone's ethnic roots even if they have little in the way of active Latvian identification and no language retention. In addition, about three-fourths of Latvian Albertans have a Latvian family name, the distinctiveness of which gives rise to questions about one's ethnic origin. Also, most immigrants have retained an accent.

In order to assess the social mobility of Latvians in Alberta, respondents were asked their own occupation and the occupation of their fathers. Owners, managers and discretionary employees were classified as "high", other occupation groups as "low". The following occupational status categories were developed: self-high, father-high; self-high, father-low; self-low, father high; and self-low, father-low. Table 4-17 shows how these categories were distributed among the three subgroups: the "Latvian", the "Mixed" and the "Canadian". The "self-high, father-high" status group was distributed evenly over the three subgroups: 16% of the "Latvian", 17% of the "Mixed" and 17% of the "Canadian" subgroup. The upward mobile group ("self-high, father-low") was strongest among the "Latvian" subgroup (33%), a bit weaker in the "Mixed" subgroup (28%) and by far the weakest among the "Canadian" subgroup (19%). The latter

phenomenon may be temporary and due to the youth of the "Canadian" subgroup. In the downward mobile category ("self-low, father-high") the "Canadian" subgroup showed the largest share (10%), again, possibly because of the subgroup's youth. There were fewer downward mobiles in the "Mixed" (6%) and even fewer in the "Latvian" (2%) subgroup. The category with steadily low occupational status ("self-low, father-low") was by far the largest. The subgroups showed similar shares of this category: they make up 49% of the "Latvian", 49% of the "Mixed", and 55% of the "Canadian" subgroup. Again, the higher share of "low-lows" among the "Canadians" may be due to the subgroup's youth.

Table 4-17

Social Mobility of Family, Latvia to Alberta, by Subgroup (vertical percent) (N=144)

	Subgroup		
Social mobility	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
Same level-high	16.4	17.0	16.7
Upward	32.7	27.7	19.0
Downward	1.8	6.4	9.5
Same level-low	49.1	48.9	54.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Discussed here was the process of acculturation of the Latvian Albertans. In order to make meaningful comparisons the community was divided into three subgroups designated as: "Latvian", "Mixed", and "Canadian". The data obtained from these three subgroups showed that the degree of acculturation is closely correlated with membership in one

of the three subgroups. It is evident from the data that the knowledge of mother tongue is declining since four-fifths of the Canadian-born group speak only English at home and one can assume that they do not know Latvian. The membership in the Latvian church among the Canadian-born was 31%. Many of these are members in name only and do not attend church. One therefore has to draw the conclusion that the Latvian church plays a very small role in the lives of the Latvian community in Alberta. The same conclusion can be made with regard to the Latvian associations in Alberta. These play only a very minor role. To offer an explanation why Canadian-born Latvians do not want to learn the mother tongue and do not want to be active in the Latvian ethnic group, one has to look at the Latvian community in Alberta, particularly in Edmonton. The Latvian community in Edmonton is not a homogeneous group. The Latvian immigrants of the third wave were divided even before they arrived in Edmonton, the main reason being their experiences before coming to Canada. It seems that personality problems played a very considerable role. In the Latvian church organizations and associations dissenting cliques or individuals engaged in emotional withdrawals from meetings and engaged in vitriolic debates. Longstanding personality conflicts came to the fore and further diminished the chances of Latvian unity in Alberta. This explanation casts some light on the Latvian community in Edmonton and the reason why so many Canadian-born Latvians do not want to associate with their ethnic group. Therefore, the process of acculturation has progressed farthest among Latvians born in Canada, a finding which confirms the hypothesis that the problem of survival of a small ethnic group in the context of present western Canadian society is very difficult if not impossible.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1. During the survey work among the Latvian community in Alberta, the author discovered that there was a definite pattern of attitudes emerging based on the division of age and this was the reason for dividing the group into the three main subgroups. The "Latvian" subgroup's age as fifty-five and over was chosen because they would have finished their school attendance in Latvia. The "Mixed" subgroup was established by including those born in Latvia, but too young to attend school or receiving only up to three years of primary schooling. The "Canadian" subgroup were the children born in Canada of immigrant Latvian parents. Eliminated from classification because they might make the groups less coherent, were those below the age of fifty-five, but who had spent more than eleven years in Latvia and those born during the migration from Latvia to Canada.

2. Regarding information on affiliation with Canadian associations, no detailed reply was asked for in the questionnaire.

3. Of the older age group 80% gave a higher rating to Latvian culture, and only 14% to Canadian culture. Of the younger group, however, 50% rated Canadian culture higher, and only 40% Latvian culture.

4. The group 45 or older divides as follows: Latvian Canadian 75%, Canadian 15%, Latvian Ethnic 11%; the distribution of the younger group is Canadian 66%, Latvian Canadian 33%, Latvian Ethnic 2%.

CHAPTER V

POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR OF LATVIANS IN ALBERTA

This chapter deals with the political behaviour of Alberta's Latvian community. The first section will discuss briefly the extent of interest in, and information on, Canadian politics on the part of Latvian Albertans, as well as their sources of information. The second part of the chapter will deal with the attitude of Latvian Albertans toward the political parties, on the federal and provincial levels. The third part of the chapter concerns the participation in elections of Albertans of Latvian ethnicity. To permit comparison over time, only those of the 326 respondents will be included who were old enough to vote in 1967. Thus we can include the federal elections of 1968, 1972 and 1974, and the provincial elections of 1967, 1971 and 1975. The final section will contain a composite profile of the ten Latvian Canadians whose political participation in Alberta amounts or amounted to more than voting.

Political interest and information

Evidence regarding the interest in Canadian politics on the part of Latvian Albertans is derived from replies to the question: "Would you say your interest in politics now is: very strong, fairly strong, moderate, negligible, or not at all?" (Table 5-1). Here we return again to the three subgroups, as established in chapter four. By examining the data obtained from the three subgroups, "Latvian", "Mixed", and "Canadian", one finds a very strong interest in Canadian politics only in 6% of the first, 5% of the second and 4% of the last group. Fairly

strong interest in Canadian politics was indicated by 13% of the "Latvian" subgroup, 16% of the "Mixed" and 5% of the "Canadian" subgroup. Moderate interest in Canadian politics was distributed more evenly among the three subgroups; 51% of the "Latvian", 51% of the "Mixed" and 45% of the "Canadian". If we collapse the answers, negligible and not at all interested in Canadian politics, we find 20% of the "Latvian" subgroup, 27% of the "Mixed" and 47% of the "Canadian". The above data indicated that the interest in Canadian politics on the part of the Latvian Albertans was by and large only moderate. The "Mixed" subgroup was the most interested, then came the "Latvian" and the least interested was the "Canadian" subgroup. This could be explained by the youth of the "Canadian" subgroup, and the fact that the young generation born in Canada do not discuss politics at home or do not agree with their parents' political views and therefore avoid political discussions.

Table 5-1

Level of interest in Canadian politics, by Subgroup (vertical percent) (N=305)

Political interest	Subgroup		
	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
Very strong	5.6	5.4	3.7
Fairly strong	12.9	16.2	4.7
Moderate	50.8	51.4	44.9
Negligible	23.4	23.0	33.6
Not at all	7.3	4.1	13.1
Total	100.0	100.1	100.0

As to the difference in the degree of interest in Canadian politics regarding the three subgroups evidence is supplied by the replies to the question asking: "When it comes to Canadian government and politics, how well informed are you?" (Table 5-2). Again the "Mixed" subgroup has the

Table 5-2

Level of information about Canadian Politics, by Subgroup (vertical percent) (N=303)

Political information	Subgroup		
	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
Very well	4.1	11.0	4.7
Well	23.6	24.7	8.4
Somewhat	35.8	39.7	35.5
Little	31.7	20.5	36.4
Not at all	4.9	4.1	15.0
Total	100.1	100.0	100.0

highest percentage of informed members, with 11% very well informed, as compared to 4% of the "Latvian" and 5% of the "Canadian" subgroups. Well informed were 25% of the "Mixed", 24% of the "Latvian" and 8% of the "Canadian" subgroups. Those somewhat informed were similar in all three subgroups, 36% of the "Latvian", 40% of the "Mixed" and 36% of the "Canadian" subgroups. When we combine those little and not at all informed, we find 8% of the "Mixed", 37% of the "Latvian" and 51% of the "Canadian" subgroup. Again, the small percentage of those informed about Canadian government and politics in the "Canadian" subgroup could be ascribed to the age of this group, who are mostly in the 15-24 age range.

The "Mixed" group were better informed than the "Latvian" group possibly because they have, as Chapter 4 shows, more connections with Canadian society.

Regarding the sources of information about Canadian government and politics used by Latvian Albertans, a series of questions was asked to find the sources of information most frequently used to obtain the news on government and political developments in the province and in the country as a whole (Table 5-3). It became evident from these data that television was the most popular in all three subgroups: 94% of the "Latvian", 95% of the "Mixed" and 97% of the "Canadian" subgroup used television as a source of information about Canadian government and politics. The next popular source of information was radio, with 92% of the "Latvian", 89% of the "Mixed" and 89% of the "Canadian" subgroup using it for political information. The third source of information was the newspapers, used by 66% of the "Latvian", 71% of the "Mixed" and 57% of the "Canadian" subgroup. Magazines were given as a source of political information by 55% of the "Latvian", 62% of the "Mixed", and 48% of the "Canadian" subgroup. The least frequent sources of information were the organizations concerned with politics, for 6% of the "Latvian" subgroup, 12% of the "Mixed" and 4% of the "Canadian". Only slightly more mention was given to political conversation, by 13% of the "Latvian", 19% of the "Mixed" and 11% of the "Canadian" subgroup. Subgroup membership thus is shown to have little impact on the choice of media for the gathering of political information.

The above data indicate that the interest in Canadian politics on the part of the Latvian Albertans is by and large moderate. The "Mixed"

Table 5-3

Sources of Political Information for Latvian Albertans, by Subgroup (multiple answers, percent users)

Users of Sources	Subgroup		
Newspapers	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
Yes	65.5	71.2	56.9
No	34.5	28.8	43.1
Magazines			
Yes	54.6	61.6	47.5
No	45.5	38.4	52.5
Radio			
Yes	91.6	89.0	88.9
No	8.4	11.0	11.1
T.V.			
Yes	94.1	94.5	97.0
No	5.9	5.5	3.0
Organizations			
Yes	5.9	12.3	4.0
No	94.1	87.7	96.0
Political talk			
Yes	13.4	19.2	11.1
No	86.6	80.8	88.9
	(N=119)	(N=73)	(N=99)

subgroup was the most interested. An explanation for this might be their length of stay in Alberta, for they have lived most of their lives in the province, acquired their education in Alberta and become actively involved in various aspects in Alberta's life. The moderate interest of the "Latvian" subgroup in Canadian politics might be explained by the low level of their command of the English language. The least interest

in Canadian politics was shown by the "Canadian" subgroup. This could be explained by their age and possibly by the fact that they never learned about Canadian politics in their family setting in their formative years. Similar explanations can be offered with regard to the political information of the three subgroups. As to the sources of information regarding Canadian government and politics used by Latvian Albertans, the data demonstrate that television was the most popular source in all three subgroups. The second source were radio broadcasts. The third source of information were the newspapers and the fourth the journals, but here the percentage was much lower. This indicates that some Latvian Albertans have difficulty with written English and therefore cannot make use of printed sources. The least important source of information were political organizations and political conversations, where proficiency in the English language is most important.

Attitude toward political parties

Having dealt with interest, information and sources of information about Canadian government and politics on the part of Latvian Albertans, we now turn to their attitude toward political parties.

To avoid using a direct question inquiring as to which political party the members of the Latvian community supported, an indirect question was used asking which party they thought would be best for Canada and best for Alberta. This approach was used to obviate the interviewer's strong apprehension that some respondents would refuse to answer a direct question about their political party support. From the way in which the answers were given, however, the interviewer was left with a very strong feeling that these were in fact the party preferences of those surveyed.

On the question: "Which party do you think is best for Canada in federal politics?" (Table 5-4), 71% of the "Latvian" subgroup stated that the best party for federal Canada is the Progressive Conservative party. In the "Mixed" subgroup, 47% named the Progressive Conservatives, and 42% of the "Canadian" subgroup did so. In contrast 28% of the "Latvian" subgroup, 50% of the "Mixed" and 57% of the "Canadian", stated that the Liberal party was best for Canada.

Table 5-4

Political Party Best for Canada, by Subgroup (vertical percent) (N=272)

	Subgroup		
Party	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
Liberal	27.7	50.0	56.5
P.C.	70.6	47.1	42.4
N.D.P.	0.0	1.5	0.0
Social Credit	1.7	1.5	1.2
Total	100.0	100.1	100.1

On the question: "Which party do you think is best for Alberta?" (Table 5-5), the data show that a large majority in all three subgroups named the Progressive Conservatives as the best party for Alberta: 93% of the "Latvian", 75% of the "Mixed" and 92% of the "Canadian" subgroup. In view of the fact that most Albertans vote for the Progressive Conservatives, these figures are not surprising; most Latvians simply voted as other Albertans did.

Table 5-5

Party best for Alberta, by Subgroup (vertical percent)
(N=269)

	Subgroup		
Party	Latvian	Mixed	Canadian
Liberal	1.7	8.8	3.6
P.C.	93.2	75.0	91.7
N.D.P.	0.0	5.9	1.2
Social Credit	5.1	10.3	3.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.1

Table 5-6 gives us two main groups: those who feel that the Progressive Conservatives are the best party for both Canada and Alberta, and those who feel that the governing party at the time of the interview was best for the respective jurisdiction. A comparison of these two groups follows.

Table 5-6

Political Party Best for Canada and Alberta (percent)
(N=262)

Best Party	
Liberal, both levels	4.2
Liberal-federal, P.C.-provincial	37.4
P.C., both levels	58.4
Total	100.0

Table 5-7 gives us the age distribution of the two groups. Liberals federally and Progressive Conservatives provincially were

favoured as best by majorities of the younger age groups, from 15 to 44. Progressive Conservatives for both levels of government were favoured by the age groups 45 and over, and particularly by those over 55. Table 5-8 shows that 47% of the men and 27% of the women found Liberals best for Canada and Progressive Conservatives best for Alberta. Sixty-eight percent of the women and 50% of the men (Table 5-8) found the Progressive Conservatives best for both governments.

Table 5-7

Political Party Best for Canada and Alberta, by Age (vertical percent) (N=262)

Best Party	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 & over
Liberal, both levels	5.5	0.0	7.1	10.9	1.4	2.3
Liberal-federal, P.C.-provincial	50.9	54.3	50.0	34.8	26.1	23.3
P.C.,both levels	43.6	45.7	42.9	54.3	72.5	74.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

These findings correspond only partly to the research data obtained over the years on all-Canadian party support. Mildred Schwartz reports that during the nineteen-fifties and sixties the Progressive Conservative party received disproportionately larger support from older voters, whereas the Liberals established an inverse relationship.[1] On the other hand, Schwartz states that there is nothing very distinctive or noteworthy about the differences in electoral behaviour between men

and women in Canada.[2] However, among Latvian Albertans women had a greater predisposition for the Conservative party.

Table 5-8

Political Party Best for Canada and Alberta, by Sex (vertical percent) (N=262)

	Sex	
Best Party	Male	Female
Liberal, both levels	3.0	5.5
Liberal-federal, P.C.- provincial	47.4	26.8
P.C., both levels	49.6	67.7
Total	100.0	100.0

There was a marked difference between the two groups if one looks at the language spoken at home now. Of those who spoke Latvian at home, 77% felt that Progressive Conservatives were best for Canada and Alberta, while only 20% thought the governing party was best for its respective jurisdiction. Among those speaking English only at home 48% favoured the Progressive Conservatives on both levels, and 49% favoured the respective governing party (Table 5-9). Some of this difference is no doubt to be accounted for by the difference in age, which corresponds closely to the findings by Meisel.[3]

Membership in a Canadian church (Table 5-10), did not seem to affect attitude toward party. Of those favouring the Progressive Conservatives on both levels, 59% did belong to a Canadian church. Of those who thought that the respective government party was best for its level of government, 36% did belong to a Canadian church. The corresponding

figures for those not belonging to a Canadian church are 58% and 38%.

Table 5-9

Political Party Best for Canada and Alberta, by Language Spoken in Canada (vertical percent)
(N=262)

	Language spoken		
Best party	English	Latvian	Latvian and English
Liberal, both levels	2.6	3.2	10.0
Liberal-federal, P.C.-provincial	49.1	20.0	44.0
P.C., both levels	48.3	76.8	46.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5-10

Political Party Best for Canada and Alberta, by Canadian Church Membership (vertical percent)
(N=261)

	Canadian church member	
Best Party	Yes	No
Liberal, both levels	5.1	4.0
Liberal-federal P.C.-provincial	35.6	38.1
P.C., both levels	59.3	57.9
Total	100.0	100.0

Membership in the Latvian church gave different results (Table 5-11). Of those who belonged to a Latvian church, 71% stated that Progressive Conservatives were best for both levels of government, while

27% had split attitudes towards the political parties. Of those not belonging to the Latvian church, 43% supported the Progressive Conservatives on both levels, and 49% had split attitudes towards the parties.

Table 5-11

Political Party Best for Canada and Alberta, by Latvian Church Membership (vertical percent)
(N=262)

	Latvian church member	
Best Party	Yes	No
Liberal, both levels	1.4	7.4
Liberal-federal, P.C.-provincial	27.1	49.2
P.C., both levels	71.4	43.4
Total	99.9	100.0

The propensity of those affiliated with the Latvian church to prefer the federal Progressive Conservatives appear to be related to the finding about those speaking Latvian at home.

There were some significant differences between the two groups regarding the question: "Do you read any Latvian newspapers?" (Table 5-12); 75% of those reading Latvian newspapers thought the Progressive Conservatives best for both governments, but only 22% of the group favouring the federal Liberals. In response to the question: "Do you read any Canadian newspapers?" (Table 5-13), the results for both groups, the readers and non-readers, were very similar; 61% of the readers support Progressive Conservatives on both levels, as do 54% of the non-readers. Therefore one cannot draw significant conclusions on the

correlations between the reading of Canadian newspapers and party preference of Latvian Albertans. Again, party preference among readers of Latvian newspapers may largely be a function of age, or of a distinctly Latvian environment.

Table 5-12

Political Party Best for Canada and Alberta, by Reading of Latvian Newspapers (vertical percent)
(N=257)

	Reader	
Best Party	Yes	No
Liberal, both levels	3.0	5.1
Liberal-federal P.C.-provincial	22.2	45.6
P.C., both levels	74.7	49.4
Total	99.9	100.1

Table 5-13

Political Party Best for Canada and Alberta, by Reading of Canadian Newspapers (vertical percent)
(N=262)

	Reader	
Best Party	Yes	No
Liberal, both levels	6.2	0.0
Liberal-federal, P.C.-provincial	33.0	46.5
P.C., both levels	60.8	53.5
Total	100.0	100.0

Regarding their interest in politics (Table 5-14), 16% of the all-Progressive Conservative group answered that their interest in politics is at least fairly strong, and 51%, moderate. Of the group supporting the respective governing party, 10% said that their interest in Canadian politics is at least fairly strong and 52%, moderate. Again, there is no important difference between the two groups, except for the clustering of the split supporters at both ends of the interest scale.

Table 5-14

Political Party Best for Canada and Alberta, by Political Interest (horizontal percent)

	Political Interest					
Best Party	Strong	Fairly Strong	Moderate	Negligible	Not at all	Total
Liberal, both levels	18.2	9.1	63.6	0.0	9.1	100.0
Liberal-federal, P.C.-provincial	4.1	6.1	52.0	30.6	7.1	99.9
P.C., both levels	2.6	13.1	51.0	30.1	3.3	100.1

Regarding political information (Table 5-15), of the all-Progressive Conservative group, 4% stated that they were very well informed, 18% well, and 40% somewhat informed. Again, the split group was very similar, with 5% very well informed, 14% well, and 42% somewhat informed. Among the split party supporters, the least informed were more strongly represented. The data referred to indicate that the group supporting Progressive Conservatives for Alberta and Liberals federally are younger and live in a Canadian milieu. Since this survey was conducted in 1976/77,

this untypical support for the federal Liberals might be the effect of the image of Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

Table 5-15

Political Party Best for Canada and Alberta, by Political Information (horizontal percent) (N=262)

Best party	Very well	Well	Somewhat	Little	Not at all	Total
Liberal, both levels	9.1	18.2	54.5	9.1	9.1	100.0
Liberal-federal, P.C.-provincial	5.1	14.3	41.8	30.6	8.2	100.0
P.C., both levels	3.9	17.6	40.5	35.3	2.6	99.9

The fact that the majority of Latvian Albertans find the Progressive Conservative party the better party for Canada is contrary to the nation-wide findings of John Meisel and Mildred Schwartz that the Liberals appeal very strongly to the post-Second World War immigrants.[4]

Some explanations for this apparent discrepancy can be presented. The federal Progressive Conservative party since 1958 has been the strongest in Alberta. Its strength in Alberta has increased since. A very important factor for Latvian Albertans' preference for federal Progressive Conservatives was their liking for John G. Diefenbaker. Being a third Canadian (not English or French) himself and with a western background, his leadership doubtlessly affected the preference of Latvian Albertans for the federal Progressive Conservatives. Another important factor of Latvian Albertans' preference for the federal Progressive

Conservatives may well be their desire to identify with other Albertans.

As for voting in provincial elections this last statement applies here too. Latvian Albertans appear to prefer the party which the majority of Albertans prefer.

Voting participation

The analysis in this part concerns the participation in elections of Albertans of Latvian ethnicity. Of the 326 respondents only 198 were eligible to vote in the 1968, 1972 and 1974 federal and the 1967, 1971 and 1975 provincial elections. For the purpose of this analysis, 198 Latvian Albertans who were eligible to take part in all elections represent one hundred percent (199 were eligible by the time of the first federal election, 1968). Table 5-16 shows the voting pattern in the federal elections of 1968, 1972 and 1974. Eighty-one percent of the Latvian Albertans voted in every one of the three federal elections, while the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer for 1968 gave 73% as the turnout rate for all voters in Alberta and 76% for Canada as a whole;[5] for the 1972 election, a turnout rate of 76% of all Albertans and 77% of all Canadians;[6] and for 1974, a rate of 67% of all Albertans and 71% of all Canadians.[7]

In the provincial elections the pattern of participation was as follows (Table 5-17): eighty percent of the Latvian Albertans voted in every one of the three elections as compared to 65% of all Albertans in 1967,[8] 72% of all Albertans in 1971,[9] and 59% of all Albertans in 1975.[10]

Table 5-18 shows the composite participation of the 198 voters eligible in all six elections. Because of the distribution, it was decided to compare those who voted in all six elections with those who

did not vote in any election at all. Since not a single one of the "Canadian" subgroup was among the 198 voters, the subgroups used for the social analysis in chapter four and in the first two parts in this chapter will not be used in the analysis of voting participation. We will call those who voted in all six elections "regular voters" and those who voted in none "non-voters".

Table 5-16

Participation of Latvian Albertans in the Federal Elections of 1968, 1972 & 1974 (percent) (N=198)

Number of elections voted in	
0	12.1
1	1.0
2	6.0
3	80.9
Total	100.0

Table 5-17

Participation of Latvian Albertans in the Provincial Elections of 1967, 1971 & 1975 (percent) (N=198)

Number of elections voted in	
0	12.6
1	0.5
2	6.6
3	80.3
Total	100.0

Table 5-18

Participation of Latvian Albertans in Six Federal and Provincial Elections (1967-1975; percent) (N=198)

Number of elections voted in	
0	12.1
1	0.5
2	0.5
4	5.1
5	2.5
6	79.3
Total	100.0

Table 5-19 shows a sex distribution of 55% men and 45% women among the regular voters and 58% women and 42% men among the non-voters. Men thus are shown to have participated more regularly than women. We can assume that immigrant women, at least initially, were not as much motivated to participate as were men.

Table 5-19

Participation of Latvian Albertans in Six Elections (1967-1975), by Sex (vertical percent) (N=198)

	Number of elections					
Sex	0	1	2	4	5	6
Male	41.7	100.0	100.0	30.0	60.0	54.8
Female	58.3	0.0	0.0	70.0	40.0	45.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The question: "What language do you speak at home, now in Canada?" (Table 5-20), did not discriminate between regular voters and non-voters. Of the regular voters, 60% spoke Latvian at home, while 25% declared English as their language of communication in the home environment, and 15% used both languages. Of the non-voters, 63% spoke only Latvian at home, 25% English and 12% Latvian and English.

Table 5-20

Participation of Latvian Albertans in Six Elections 1967-1975), by Language Spoken in Canada (vertical percent) (N=196)

	Number of Elections					
Language	0	1	2	4	5	6
English	25.0	100.0	100.0	20.0	0.0	24.8
Latvian	62.5	0.0	0.0	30.0	0.0	59.9
Latvian and English	12.5	0.0	0.0	50.0	100.0	15.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Regarding church membership, among regular voters 72% indicated their affiliation with the Latvian church, while 18% declared that they were members of a Canadian church. However, of those who never voted, only 54% belonged to the Latvian church and 8% to the Canadian church (Tables 5-21 and 22). Church membership thus appears to have encouraged Latvian Albertans' participation in the political act of voting in elections.

Work status (Table 5-23) was shown to have a slight influence in voting. Of the regular voters, 59% indicated that they are gainfully employed and 22% were in the category of retired people. Of the non-

voting Latvian segment, 50% were also still in the labour force and 29% had retired.

Table 5-21

Participation of Latvian Albertans in Six Elections, 1967-1975, by Membership in Latvian Church (vertical percent) (N=198)

	Number of Elections					
Member	0	1	2	4	5	6
Yes	54.2	0.0	0.0	40.0	40.0	72.0
No	45.8	100.0	100.0	60.0	60.0	28.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5-22

Participation of Latvian Albertans in Six Elections 1967-1975, by Membership in Canadian Church (vertical percent) (N=198)

	Number of elections					
Member	0	1	2	4	5	6
Yes	8.3	0.0	100.0	30.0	60.0	18.5
No	91.7	100.0	0.0	70.0	40.0	81.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Regarding association membership (Table 5-24), the data show the following: 51% of the regular voting Latvian Albertans belonged to Latvian associations. Among the non-voting segment of the community surveyed, 58% belonged to Latvian associations. Also, of the regular voters, 29% belonged to various Canadian associations (Table 5-25), and so did 21% of the non-voting Latvians. These findings indicate that

being associated with an ethnic organization tended to discourage voting participation, while belonging to a Canadian association tended to encourage it.

Table 5-23

Participation of Latvian Albertans in Six Elections 1967-1975, by Status in the Work Force (vertical percent) (N=198)

	Number of elections					
Working	0	1	2	4	5	6
Yes	50.0	100.0	100.0	50.0	40.0	58.6
No	50.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	60.0	41.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5-24

Participation of Latvian Albertans in Six Elections 1967-1975, by Membership in Latvian Association (vertical percent) (N=196)

	Number of elections					
Member	0	1	2	4	5	6
Yes	58.3	0.0	0.0	40.0	40.0	51.0
No	41.7	100.0	100.0	60.0	60.0	49.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

That the active participation in an election is closely related to the awareness on the part of the voter of issues involved in an election is to be expected. Equally to be expected is that voters tend to obtain such information through the medium of the press. It is therefore not surprising that of those Latvian Albertans who voted in all six elections,

63% read Latvian newspapers and 73% Canadian newspapers (Table 5-26 and 27). Of those who never participated in elections, 75% did not read any Latvian newspaper and 67% did not read any Canadian newspaper.

Table 5-25

Participation of Latvian Albertans in Six Elections 1967-1975, by Membership in Canadian Association (vertical percent) (N=193)

	Number of elections					
Member	0	1	2	4	5	6
Yes	20.8	0.0	0.0	12.5	60.0	28.6
No	79.2	100.0	100.0	87.5	40.0	71.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5-26

Participation of Latvian Albertans in Six Elections 1967-1975, by Reading of Latvian newspaper (vertical percent) (N=194)

	Number of elections					
Reader	0	1	2	4	5	6
Yes	25.0	0.0	0.0	87.5	40.0	62.6
No	75.0	100.0	100.0	12.5	60.0	37.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Regarding respondents' view of the superiority of one culture over the other (Table 5-28), 78% of the regular voters stated that Latvian culture is superior. Since 73% of the non-voters thought that the Latvian culture was superior, one cannot draw any significant conclusions about the correlation between the views on the cultural superiority of the

Latvian culture and the degree of political participation (for instance, that a belief in the superiority of Latvian culture would tend to depress voting participation in Canada).

Table 5-27

Participation of Latvian Albertans in Six Elections 1967-1975, by Reading of Canadian newspaper (vertical percent) (N=198)

	Number of elections					
Reader	0	1	2	4	5	6
Yes	33.3	0.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	72.6
No	66.7	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	27.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5-28

Participation of Latvian Albertans in Six Elections 1967-1975, by Evaluation of Latvian Culture (vertical percent) (N=184)

	Number of elections					
Evaluation of Culture	0	1	2	4	5	6
Latvian higher	72.7	0.0	0.0	87.5	100.0	77.7
Canadian higher	13.6	100.0	100.0	12.5	0.0	16.9
Equal	13.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.4
Total	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

A slightly more relevant correlation between voting and the ethnic identification of the voters could be drawn from the tabulation of answers to the question: "What do you think you are: Latvian ethnic, Latvian-

Canadian or Canadian?" (Table 5-29). Among those who took part in all elections, 74% identified themselves as "Latvian-Canadian", 17% as a "Canadian", and only 10% as "Latvian ethnic"; among non-voters, 62% identified themselves as "Latvian-Canadian", 21% as "Canadian" and 17% as "Latvian-ethnic". Interesting about these findings is that the group that feels unassimilated participated less, and so did the group that feels most assimilated.

Table 5-29

Participation of Latvian Albertans in Six Elections 1967-1975, by Perceived Ethnicity (vertical percent) (N=197)

	Number of elections					
Perceived ethnicity	0	1	2	4	5	6
Latvian ethnic	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.6
Latvian Canadian	62.5	0.0	0.0	100.0	75.0	73.9
Canadian	20.8	100.0	100.0	0.0	25.0	16.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.1

That the question directly related to one's interest in politics emerged as a very strong indicator of voting participation was not surprising (Table 5-30): 56% of the regular voters answered that their interest in politics is moderate, 15% stated that it was fairly strong, while 5% indicated their very strong interest. Of those who did not vote 58% said that their interest in politics was negligible and 21% indicated that they had no interest in politics at all.

Table 5-30

Participation of Latvian Albertans in Six Elections 1967-1975, by Political Interest (vertical percent) (N=198)

Political Interest	Number of Elections 0	1	2	4	5	6
Very strong	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	20.0	5.1
Fairly strong	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	40.0	14.6
Moderate	20.8	0.0	0.0	80.0	40.0	56.1
Negligible	58.3	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	20.5
Not at all	20.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.8
Total	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.1

A similarly strong voting determinant was political information (Table 5-31). Of the regular voters 6% indicated that they were very well informed, 24% claimed to be well informed and 42% somewhat informed; only 2% were not at all informed but still voted in all six elections. In the non-voting group the majority, 62%, said they were very little informed, while 17% admitted to having no political information at all.

When asked which level of government was doing most for them as persons (Table 5-32), 56% of all Latvian Albertans who took part in the six elections discussed named the federal government, while 35% considered the provincial government the most useful to them. Among the non-voting group, in contrast, 56% named the provincial government as one that did the most for them, and 26% the federal government. This important finding is difficult to explain without further analysis, but it may well indicate that a certain amount of cosmopolitan attitude goes with regular participation.

Table 5-31

Participation of Latvian Albertans in Six Elections 1967-1975, by Political Information (vertical percent) (N=197)

Political Information	Number of elections 0	1	2	4	5	6
Very well	4.2	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	6.4
Well	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	100.0	23.7
Somewhat	16.7	0.0	0.0	60.0	0.0	42.3
Little	62.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.6
Not at all	16.7	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	1.9
Total	100.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.9

Table 5-32

Participation of Latvian Albertans in Six Elections 1967-1975, by Level of Government Doing Most for Respondent (vertical percent) (N=191)

Level of government	Number of elections 0	1	2	4	5	6
City	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7
Provincial	56.5	100.0	0.0	55.6	0.0	35.3
Federal	26.1	0.0	0.0	44.4	60.0	55.6
All the same	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.6
Do not know	17.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	40.0	2.6
Provincial and Federal	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3
Total	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	100.1

It is however worth noticing that both groups, 62% of regular voters and 70% of non-voters, regarded the provincial government as the most useful as far as taking care of the interests of the Latvian community is concerned (Table 5-33). This is probably due to the fact that in recent years in particular the provincial government was involved in furthering the policy of multiculturalism in Alberta - perhaps to a greater degree than in other provinces - and that the benefits received from the provincial government were known to the members of the Latvian community surveyed.

Table 5-33

Participation of Latvian Albertans in Six Elections 1967-1975, by Level of Government Doing Most for Latvians (vertical percent) (N=178)

	Number of elections					
Level of Government	0	1	2	4	5	6
Provincial	70.0	0.0	0.0	75.0	40.0	62.0
Federal	5.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	20.0	22.8
Provincial and Federal	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4
Do not know	25.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	40.0	13.8
Total	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Political activists

All 326 respondents were asked: "Do you belong to any organization that has anything to do with politics, for example, a political party?" Only a small minority - 3% - did indeed belong to a political party. Similar figures were obtained when those surveyed were asked

whether they had ever been active in politics and government.

It was decided to investigate these politically active Latvians. As the group is so very small, only ten people, it was decided to look at them individually.

Two were born in Canada, the others were immigrants, arriving in Canada in the following years: one in 1929, one in 1947, three in 1948, one in 1949 and two in 1952. Six of the politically active were men and four women. The age groups varied: two were in the age group of 15-24 years, one in the 25-34 age group, one in the 35-44 group, three were in the 45-54 group, one between 55 and 64 years, and two 65 years and over. Five reported that Latvian and English are spoken at home, four only Latvian, and one only English.

Regarding the education level of the political active Latvians in Alberta, to the questions: "Did you go to school in Latvia?" and "Have you gone to school in Canada?", the following answers were given: six stated that they had gone to school in Latvia, and two were too young to go to school in Latvia. In Canada, eight have gone to school. Of these five have obtained university degrees, two have finished high school and one has a grade ten education. Seven of these politically active indicated that they were very satisfied with their life in Canada and three stated that they were satisfied. One of these was born in Canada, the other two were immigrants and over sixty-five years of age.

Of the ten politically active, six were working, two retired and two were still students at the University. Their occupations were in the following fields: independent professional, managerial and administering their own business.

Six of the active Latvians were members of the Latvian Church and five were members of a Canadian church. Seven were Lutherans, one Roman Catholic and two belonged to the United Church. Seven belonged to Latvian associations, and seven also belonged to various Canadian associations and clubs.

To the question: "Do you have more Latvian than Canadian friends?", seven replied that they have more Canadian friends and three that they have more Latvian friends. However, on the question of best friends' nationality, seven indicated that their best friends are from both groups, while two had only Canadian, and one had only Latvians as best friends. All ten politically active Latvians stated that all their Canadian friends knew that they were Latvians. They all read Canadian newspapers and nine also read Latvian newspapers. Eight felt that Latvian culture is superior and only one felt that Canadian culture is better; one was undecided.

To the question: "What do you think you are: Latvian ethnic, Latvian-Canadian, or Canadian?", nine answered that they are Latvian-Canadians, and one Canadian.

Regarding voting participation, the only two who did not vote in all six elections were too young to have been eligible.

The information collected about the political activities of these ten politically active Latvians shows that eight have participated in Canada only, and two in both Latvia and Canada. Seven have participated in the capacity of party members, only one was an executive of a party and two have been candidates as well as executives in a political party. Three stated that they were very well informed in politics and seven felt that they were well informed.

To the question: "How did you find out about politics?", all ten read newspapers and listened to radio, while nine read magazines and watched television. Nine also found political information by belonging to various organizations concerned with politics and government. Eight stated that they gained political information through political conversation. The level of interest in politics varied from very strong to moderate. The majority got interested in Canadian politics and government through other Canadians and not through fellow Latvians.

When asked which level of government was doing most for them and also for the Latvian community, eight of the activists stated that the provincial government was doing most for them and also for the Latvian community in Alberta, one named the federal government and the remaining was undecided in both cases.

Among the ten politically active Latvians in Alberta four stated that the Liberal party is best for Canada, five named the Progressive Conservatives and one named Social Credit as the best party for Canada. For Alberta, nine responded that Progressive Conservatives are the best party for Alberta and one, Social Credit.

From the foregoing, we can conclude that the modal politically active Latvian in Alberta is over forty-five years of age, came as an immigrant after the Second World War, has a university degree and works in a managerial position in his or her own business. He or she is interested in Canadian government and politics, well read, has a command of at least two languages and participates in various Latvian and Canadian organizations and clubs.

The attitude toward political parties on the part of Alberta's

Latvians is similar to that of the majority of other Albertans, with the exception that relatively more younger Latvian Albertans feel that the Liberal party is best for Canada.

From the above data on the political involvement of Latvian Albertans it is obvious that active participation of the members of the Latvian community tends to be limited to voting in federal and provincial elections. Yet at the same time the participation in voting in the federal and provincial elections is higher than that of the average Canadian. These data revealed that the Latvian immigrants wanted to be good citizens and felt that participating in Canadian elections gave them a measure of respectability within the Canadian society. They confirm the larger picture, that political culture on the European continent is, as Almond and Verba[11] call it, more subject and less participatory than in North America. It is thus not surprising that Latvians vote more frequently than the average Canadian, but that they apparently participate less actively.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER V

1. M. A. Schwartz, "Canadian Voting Behavior," in Richard Rose, Electoral Behavior (New York, The Free Press; London, Macmillan, 1974), p. 598.

2. Ibid., pp. 599-600.

3. John Meisel, ed., Working Papers on Canadian Politics (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973), p. 9; also see Table I and II.

4. John Meisel, op. cit., tables I and II; Mildred A. Schwartz, "Political behavior and ethnic origin," in John Meisel, ed., Papers on the 1962 Election (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), p. 254.

5. Canada, Report of the Chief Electoral Officer (Ottawa, Information Canada, 1969), p. IX.

6. Canada, Report of the Chief Electoral Officer (Ottawa, Information Canada, 1973), p. IX.

7. Canada, Report of the Chief Electoral Officer (Ottawa, Information Canada, 1975), p. IX.

8. Alberta Teachers Association, Provincial Election Statistics 1967/1971/1975 for the Province of Alberta (Edmonton, Alberta Teachers Association, August, 1978), p. 13.

9. Ibid., p. 15.

10. Ibid., p. 17.

11. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1963). The relevant countries Almond and Verba studied are the United States, Germany and Italy.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

It has been the purpose of this study to examine some of the social and political characteristics of the Latvian community in Alberta, one of the smallest ethnocultural groups in the province, and to explain these on the basis of the data collected through a structured questionnaire.

To understand the small ethnic community better, an attempt was made to provide a brief outline of the history of Latvia and the Latvians, and to write about the immigrants who came to Alberta, particularly those after the Second World War, who brought with them the culture and the political traditions of their homeland.

The adjustment to the newly chosen country, the question of succeeding economically and socially, was clearly the first priority of the third and last wave (the post-1945 wave), of the Latvian immigrants arriving in Alberta. To learn the English language was a difficult task all in itself. Their life in urban surroundings - and here they differ from the previous two waves of Latvian immigrants to Alberta - made and continues to make for a much faster process of assimilation.

Already the history of the Latvians in Alberta foreshadowed a positive answer to this study's main hypothesis, that a small ethnocultural group would find it difficult to survive in the Alberta context. In order to make meaningful comparisons about the process of acculturation of the Latvian Albertans, the community was divided into three subgroups designated as: "Latvian", "Mixed" and "Canadian". The data obtained from the questionnaires indicated that the degree of acculturation

was closely correlated with membership in the three subgroups. The process of acculturation was fastest among Latvians born in Canada, which affirmed the hypothesis that the survival of a small ethnocultural group in the context of Alberta's society of today is very questionable indeed.

The main reasons supporting and explaining the above conclusion are two-fold: the internal factors within the Latvian community in Alberta and the external factors, outside the Latvian community.

The internal causes originating within the Latvian community played an important role and contributed to the assimilation process. The preoccupation with one's own aspirations, goals and aims resulted in the neglect to establish a cultural and religious centre in the urban settlements of Calgary and Edmonton, where the majority of the Latvian immigrants settled. The fact that the small groups in the rural area disappeared, with the exception of a few isolated families where the conditions to retain the language and customs were more favourable, contributed to the process.

The failure to provide, in the early days of post-Second World War settlement, for education of children in the Latvian language, even if only in a Sunday school or Saturday morning class setting, seriously threatened and still does threaten the survival of the Latvian community, if one accepts the idea that language retention is the main factor in the survival of an ethnocultural group. It is evident from the data that the knowledge of mother tongue is declining, since four-fifths of the Canadian-born group of Latvian Albertans speak only English at home and one can assume that they do not know Latvian.

The failure to maintain one Latvian Lutheran church was detrimental to the attempts to maintain a cohesive religious community. The

membership in the Latvian church among the Canadian born was 31%; however, many of these are members in name only and do not attend church. One therefore has to draw the conclusion that the Latvian church plays a very small role in the lives of the Latvian community in Alberta. The same conclusion can be made with regard to the Latvian associations in Alberta. One has to reiterate the conclusion arrived at in chapter four. The Latvian community in Alberta is not a homogeneous group. There were and still are divisions within the Latvian community, which is too small to allow for accommodation when differences emerge caused by personality conflicts and ambition of individuals who tend to divide the community. These internal causes may have led the Canadian-born group to reject the membership in Latvian associations and to find friendships among other Canadians.

Of the political factors studied, the most relevant to the major hypothesis are the data about Latvian Albertan political activists. Their number is too small, and their offices are of insufficient importance, to expect them to counteract the assimilation trend.

As to the external causes originating outside the Latvian community, these too played an important role and contributed to the assimilation process. The basic factor which seems to be a decisive element affecting Latvian survival within the Canadian and especially the Albertan context is the small size of the group, a group which must live within the Canadian majority and communicate in the English language. It is a well established fact that the new immigrant is forced from the beginning to adjust to a new environment, very different from that of his native one, for economic reasons. The immigrant and his children have to be

able to compete in a totally new economic, social and cultural setting, a condition which establishes the need to adjust to the dominant, mainly Anglo-saxon group.

Leading to faster assimilation was also the geographic factor, that of distance from the Latvian communities in Eastern Canada, in particular Toronto, and from important centres in the United States. Last, the absence of immigration from the mother country, which ceased with incorporation of Latvia into the U.S.S.R., has led to an accelerated rate of acculturation.

In conclusion, the data confirm the original expectation that the viability of Latvian Albertans as an ethno-cultural group is already declining. The question is whether the Canadian policy of multiculturalism can reverse the trend toward complete assimilation of such a small group as the Latvians in Alberta. The facts of multiculturalism in the Canadian mosaic no doubt provide the potential of maintaining ethnic identities. Perhaps the various attempts by the Latvians to preserve their own culture through activities such as folkdancing, choirs and special social events might be intensified. All of the Latvian associations in their activities use the Latvian language, but this attempt is only successful to a degree in view of the reality that the young generation never learned the language; therefore, their choice is either to leave the association or to form an English-speaking group within the given association. The language problem is a difficult one to resolve, and yet, as mentioned before, it seems to be the most important. The older people feel that it is essential to retain the language in order to preserve one's own distinct culture; the younger generation, Canadian

born, tend to be drawn into Canadian society where English is the language in education, in the economy and in social relations with their fellow Canadians of all ethnocultural groups. As a result, the young and the old tend to be drawn farther and farther apart.

What then is the future of Latvian ethnic identity in Alberta? Ethnic identity is not static, and its nature depends on the self-interest of the members. The individual must decide on his own interests, and upon the nature of the environment in which he resides. As environments change, so do allegiances. To decide to remain affiliated with a given ethnic identification is to choose a particular grouping which one hopes will serve to further one's own interests within a given milieu. Making this choice is difficult and the outcome is uncertain. The ethnics of today may well be the non-ethnic Canadians of tomorrow.

The realities of the survival of a small ethno-cultural group, far and separated from its homeland, seem indeed forbidding. As more and more individuals opt for assimilation, with accents disappearing and even some of the family names changing, the ethno-cultural survival of Latvian Albertans, beyond the next generation, may well be impossible.

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APPENDIX

1. What year did you arrive in Canada?
2. What other countries have you lived in before your arrival in Canada?
3. What language did you speak at home in Latvia?
4. What language do you speak at home now in Canada?
5. Did you go to school in Latvia?
6. What was your education when you left Latvia?
7. Have you had any formal schooling in Canada?
8. What level of education did you reach in Canada?
9. Are you satisfied with your life in Canada: (please circle)

   Very satisfied Satisfied Not satisfied Very unsatisfied
10. Are you working outside the home now?

    Yes No Student Retired
11. How would you describe your job?
12. How suitable is your job, considering your qualifications?

    Very suitable Suitable Not at all suitable
13. Are you a member of a Latvian Church?
14. Are you a member of a Canadian Church?
15. Which church please?
16. Are you a member of any Latvian Associations?
17. Which Latvian organization?

18. Are you a member of any Canadian Associations or Clubs?

19. Would you mind naming the clubs and associations, please?

20. Are you living in your own home:
    Renting a home:
    Living in a suite or condominium:

21. Are you married, single, divorced or widowed?

22. Have you any children?

23. If you have any children, please give the following:

24.	25.	26.	27.
Sex	Year of birth	Married	Ethnic background of spouse	Current home address

28. Do you have more Latvian than Canadian friends?

29. What are your best friends: Latvian, Canadian, or both?

30. Do your Canadian friends know you are a Latvian?

31. What Latvian newspapers do you read?

32. What Canadian newspapers do you read?

33. If you compare Latvian and Canadian culture, which one do you rate higher?

34. Do Canadians whom you know, feel that Latvian-Canadians have a higher or lower status than Canadians in general?

35. What do you think you are: Latvian ethnic, Latvian-Canadian, or Canadian?

36. If Latvia became free:

(a) Would you go back to live there if you were given free passage?

(b) Would you go back to live anyway?

(c) Would you stay in Canada?

37. Could you please tell me why?

38. What was your father's occupation?

39. Was your mother working outside home?

40. How old were you when you left Latvia?

If you were fourteen or over when you left, please answer the following two questions:

NOTE: This refers to questions #41 and #42.

41. If conditions in Latvia were the same as before 1940, would your chances for success have been better in Latvia or in Canada?

42. If you compare your life today with the time when you came to Canada, would you say that you as a person now consider politics, more important, less important, or about as important to yourself than it was when you first arrived?

43.	Did you vote in the federal election of 1974?	YES	NO
44.	Did you vote in the federal election of 1972?	YES	NO
45.	Did you vote in the federal election of 1968?	YES	NO
46.	Did you vote in the provincial election of 1975?	YES	NO
47.	Did you vote in the provincial election of 1971?	YES	NO
48.	Did you vote in the provincial election of 1967?	YES	NO

49. Do you belong to any organizations that have anything to do with politics, for example, a political party?

50. Have you ever been active in politics or government? YES NO

51. If yes where: in Canada, Latvia or where?

52. Who interested you to enter politics and why?

53. What was your activity?

54. When it comes to Government and Politics, how well informed are you:

Very well Well Somewhat Little Not at all

55. How do you find out about politics?

Daily newspaper
Magazines
Radio
T.V.
Organizations concerned with politics
Political conversation

56. Would you say your interest in politics now is:

Very strong Fairly strong Moderate Negligible Not at all

57. If strong, who first interested you in Canadian politics and Government?

Latvians
Other Canadians

58. Which level of Government - city, provincial, federal - would you say is doing most for you?

59. Which level of Government would you say is doing most for the Latvian Community?

60. There are various ways in which Alberta can deal with its oil resources. Which one of these ways do you like the best: (please circle)

    a. Ownership, management and control by private oil companies.

    b. Ownership and management by oil companies but quite a bit of control by government.

    c. Ownership by private companies, but management by the government.

    d. Public ownership and management by the government.

61. Would you please tell me why?

Now, here are five statements (62-66). In each case please indicate if you disagree strongly, disagree, agree or agree strongly:

62. Children today do not show enough respect for their families.

    Disagree strongly Disagree Agree Agree strongly

63. Fathers used to be much stronger figures in the family than they are today.

    Disagree strongly Disagree Agree Agree strongly

64. When religion was more important, people had fewer personal problems.

    Disagree strongly Disagree Agree Agree strongly

65. There used to be more respect for the law than there is now.

    Disagree strongly Disagree Agree Agree strongly

66. Now that fewer people go to church there is less concern for other people.

    Disagree strongly Disagree Agree Agree strongly

67. Which party do you think is best for Canada in federal politics? Liberal, P.C., NDP, Social Credit, other?

68. Which party do you think is best for Alberta?

69. Could you please tell me generally how good a job is done to teach the Latvian traditions in Latvian-Canadian families?

    Very good Good Fair Poor Very poor

70. Do you think this is a good or a bad thing?

71. Now finally, please, two things about yourself. Please, put down your birth date or check the following:

Age group: 15-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65 and over

72. Are you male or female?